Christlike Save the Fallen

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CHRISTLIKE

SAVE THE FALLEN

BY ANNIE NELLES DUMOND,

AUTHOR OF

THE LIFE OF A BOOK AGENT; "RAVENIA, OR THE OUTCAST REDEEMED;" "HAPPY AT LAST, OR A SEQUEL TO THE LIFE OF A BOOK AGENT;" "NATIONAL REFORM, OR LIQUOR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES;" "THE HARD TIMES — THE CAUSE AND THE REMEDY;" "CHURCH AND SUNDAY-SCHOOL INFLUENCE;" "SCRAPS, OR SUNDAY-SCHOOL INFLUENCE," ETC., ETC.

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Dedication.

To that noble band of heroic men and women, who, despising the reproach of the world, and having an eye single to the glory of God, labor with might and main, never wearying and never looking backward, to effect the elevation and redemption of fallen humanity, this work is respectfully dedicated.

May He who has said "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few," add daily to your numbers; may He crown your every effort with success; and may you at the last be gathered to eternal rest in His mansion, "Bringing your sheaves with you," is the earnest, heartfelt prayer of

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE favor and kindness with which former works by the authoress have been received by a generous public, has induced her to once more solicit their indulgence, and she is moved to the publication of this work solely as a means and in the hope of accomplishing some good to her fellow-creatures; and in introducing it she desires to present a few plain, practical questions to each one of her readers.

Do you know any poor outcast in your own city, village or neighborhood, who, either deservedly or otherwise, is loathed, detested and despised by almost the entire community; against whom every door is closed, and who looks in vain for any aid or countenance in the effort to escape from the worse than Egyptian bondage which enthralls them? And do you ever stop to consider that these poor, wretched, despised beings have immortal souls to be saved at last, as well as yourself? What is your conduct toward these poor unfortunates? Does your benevolence embrace even them also?

It was one of the reproaches cast on our Savior during His ministrations on earth, by the Pharisees, that He stooped too low in this respect, and that He seemed to take the part of wicked and undeserving people. "Behold," said they, "a friend of publicans and sinners;" and again, "This woman is a sinner." But He silenced and confounded them by saying, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And herein He set an example to His followers which we fear, alas! is but seldom emulated.

Are you, my reader, like Him, a friend to this most discreditable class of sinners? Is their reputed unworthiness no argument with you for declining an opportunity of doing them good, or making an earnest, Christian effort to save their immortal souls? Do you each do what in you lieth to effect their redemption, and not despair of them despite the sneers of the world and the scoffs of unchristian people? Or, on the con-

trary, does the dread of suffering in your own reputation continually check and restrain you in the just exercise of your beneficence?

Our Savior was remarkable for His condescension, humility and indifference to worldly praise, and His love has respect chiefly to the souls of mankind. Are you doing like Christ?

Are you chiefly concerned also about the souls of your fellowmen, and especially of the class of which we have been speaking? Do you seek by all means in your power to promote men's eternal interests? Do you labor to enlighten, to elevate, to instruct, to invite, to warn and to reclaim the outcast as did our Redeemer, and do you weep over the case of impenitent sinners as He wept over Jerusalem? Or, on the contrary, are you of those who make light of men's spiritual interests—who seem almost to forget that their fellow-creatures have immortal souls, and who, at the utmost, can only be prevailed on to show a little humanity to their bodies while their souls are left to perish?

These are questions which each must answer for himself, only remembering that there are none so sunken in infamy, and want, and woe, but His loving hand can reach them, and that all were once pure and innocent babes, as were you when you lay at your mother's breast.

In the hope that this little volume may lead some to more earnest reflection upon the path of duty and strengthen them to walk therein; may be the means of leading some stray lamb back to the fold, and may be received and judged by a generous public with the same kindness and favor awarded her other works, it is respectfully submitted by

THE AUTHOR.

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CHRISTLIKE—SAVE THE FALLEN.

CHAPTER I.

MARY SMITH, the heroine of our tale, was born of poor but respectable parents, in the village of Kittaning, in the State of Pennsylvania. Her father was an honest, industrious mechanic, and a man of strictly temperate and moral habits; and, so long as he retained his health, was able to support his family in a reasonably comfortable manner from the labor of his hands. But something over a year before the birth of Mary he had met with a serious accident from the giving way of a scaffold upon which he was working, and from which he sustained such serious injuries that for a long time his life was despaired of. A naturally strong constitution, however, aided by his temperate and frugal habits, at length triumphed and his life was saved, and he even restored to some degree of health. But alas! he was only the shadow of his former self, and when he once more went forth to resume his daily toil, he found that the severe shock to which his system had been subjected, and the long period of illness consequent thereupon, had sadly shattered his constitu-

tion and left him but the wreck of the active, stalwart man he once was, and that he could no longer pursue his former vocation with his accustomed zeal and energy. His spine had sustained severe injury, and his trembling limbs refused to support for any considerable length of time the weight of his manly frame.

But no other avenue of life was open to him. Fitted by habit and education only for the rough toil amid which the years of his manhood had been spent, without means to engage in any lighter or more lucrative employment, he could only struggle on against the frowns of adversity, only hoping that time might bring healing and relief. Vain hope. For more than two years he toiled on, laboring whenever his health would admit, with whatever energy he was able to command, but to little purpose. Being thus in a great measure deprived of the means of gaining a livelihood, he gradually fell behind in his pecuniary affairs, and when about a year after the birth of our heroine, he died—on account, in part no doubt, of the injuries received in the fall above mentioned—he was found to be so much involved as to render necessary the sale of almost the whole of his little property, including the cottage which had been the home of himself and his loved one, and where Mary was born, thus leaving his widow and orphan helpless, friendless and even without shelter in a cold and uncharitable world.

Mrs. Smith was a woman of remarkable beauty

and of refined and naturally intelligent character, though possessed of but a limited education; while her deep, earnest conviction of right and wrong amounted almost to religion with her. She had married William Smith solely from love of his noble manhood and admiration of his exalted moral character, and their wedded life had been but one continual scene of peace and calm content. Humble though their lot had been, and oftentimes, after her husband had been disabled by accident, approaching the verge of destitution, no murmur or word of complaint had ever passed her lips to add to the burdens which he already bore. Cheerfully she accepted her lot and walked by his side, the constant, devoted friend and supporter of him to whom she had unreservedly given, with her hand, the full measure of her true woman's love.

But when after his death, she realized fully her destitution—realized that she was alone, friendless, without means or influence, debarred by her limited education from entering any of those fields to which admission can be gained only through the portals of the school-house, but where cultivated intellect is sure to find its reward—realized that her infant daughter, even more helpless than herself, was entirely dependent upon her—what wonder that for a moment she shrank from encountering the obstacles which loomed up in such gigantic proportions before her, that the demon of despair almost took possession of her soul, and

that for a time she almost gave up all hope and wished that she might lie down in the silent slumber of the grave beside him she had so loved? But anon came a better feeling and a calmer state of mind. Her babe—the fruit and pledge of their affection—lived and must be cared for, and for her sake the mother roused herself and set about devising means to obtain a livelihood. She was advised by friends to part with her child, and one lady in particular, who had lost a child about Mary's age, was very anxious to adopt her as her own. But Mrs. Smith would not entertain the idea for a moment. No; she was her own flesh and blood and was all that she had to love—the only tie, save bitter memory, which bound her to the happy past, and she could never consent to be separated from her in life. But what could she do for her own and her infant's support?

And at once her thoughts turned to the needle—that little instrument which furnishes a precarious support for so many thousands of American women as they stitch, stitch their lives away to obtain the miserable pittance accorded their late and early toil by purse-proud capitalists, every dollar of whose wealth is stained with drops of life-blood from the very hearts of those who are forced by sheer necessity to accept their meagre bounty or starve. She well understood all the suffering and privations which would attend her life; she was fully aware that weariness and want were the almost inevitable attendants of the life of a

seamstress; she foresaw the sneers and suspicions, the covert insults which she must encounter, but the world was dark and cheerless before her, and she had no other alternative. And with a heavy heart she sallied forth from the little rooms, which the kindness of a neighbor had enabled her to procure, in search of employment in the field which not choice but stern necessity had impelled her to enter.

It is not the purpose of this story to follow Mrs. Smith through the ups and downs of her years of toil and insufficient compensation—to recount in detail the heart-burnings and bitter mortifications, the coldness, jeers and taunts which not unfrequently greeted her from those more favored by fortune than herself—it is enough for the purpose of this story to say that for more than four long years the most unremitting toil, oft protracted to the small hours of the morning, barely sufficed to provide herself and her child with the very commonest necessaries of life.

But she was of delicate frame and constitution, and the constant toil and anxiety told fearfully upon her system, and all too soon the wasted form, the pallid cheek and dry, hacking cough gave notice unmistakably that she, too, would soon be called home, and Mary left an orphan indeed. She, poor child! was too young to understand or heed these tokens of approaching dissolution, but to the mother herself they were fearfully apparent, and none but a mother's heart can

comprehend the feelings which thrilled her soul as she contemplated the prospect of her early decease. Not that she feared to go into the presence of her Maker—her soul was too pure and noble for that—but the thought of what might be the fate of her child, when she should be deprived of the guardian care of her mother, was ever present, poisoning all her joy and embittering every moment of her life. And often at the midnight hours, when her little one was wrapt in the sweet slumber of innocent childhood, she mused upon this subject until her brain almost went wild, and the scalding tears forced her to lay aside the work upon which, perhaps, the next day's supply of food and fuel depended. Oh! how fervently upon such occasions she prayed that the Father of all would, in His infinite goodness, spare her life until her daughter should no longer require the mother's fostering care. But it was not to be.

A short distance from the house, a part of which Mrs. Smith occupied, lived a kind-hearted and wealthy physician by the name of Brown. In the early gray of a spring morning, barely five years from the decease of William Smith, the door-bell of Dr. Brown's residence was rung with great violence. The doctor had just finished his toilet (for he was an early riser), and at once started for the door, but before he reached it the summons was repeated with an energy which left no doubt of the importance and urgent character

of the call awaiting him. Upon opening the door he found upon the steps the kind-hearted Irish woman from whom Mrs. Smith rented her rooms.

"Sure, docther," she said, without stopping even for the usual morning salutation, "and will ye jist go over to the place of me? The swate lady, heaven bless her, I do belave is dyin'."

"What lady do you mean?" said the doctor, hesitatingly, for he very much disliked the idea of going out before breakfast, unless the case was one of great emergency.

"What lady? Why, Mrs. Smith, for shure," said the warm-hearted Irish woman. "Bless her swate soul, she is shure to die, and then what'll become of her little darlint?"

"How long has she been sick, and what is the matter with her?"

"Matther is it? Och, docther, for shure I do belave it's jist overwork and starvin' to death she is. Poor woman! Shure she hasn't been able to work for the last year, but still she kept stitch, stich, stitch, stitchin' away, until yesther morn, not seein' her sittin' at her little winder, I jist made bould to go right into her room, and there I found her in bed, kind o' stupid like, while her little one was cryin' to be dressed, for it was long past her gittin' up time. 'Good-mornin', Mrs. Smith,' says I. 'Good-mornin,' says she, kind o' feeble-like. 'How do you feel this mornin', Mrs. Smith?' says I. 'Kind o' tired,' says she, 'but I'll be betther afther a little.' And then I jist

looked at her and I saw she was rale sick, and I jist wint and fetched her some tay and a bit of bread and butter, but no more could she ate. So I jist stayed wid her all day and all night, and I raly thought she'd die afore mornin'. Sich faintin' spells as she had," said the good woman, shaking her head slowly from side to side at the recollection; "but will yees come, docther, dear?"

"Why, bless me, yes," said the old doctor, his sympathies fully roused by the somewhat prolix, yet graphic account of the honest-hearted Irish woman. "What! starving to death, and in this Christian land! It cannot be;" and without even stopping to ask the old woman into the house, so much was he shocked and startled by her tale, he hastened to make the necessary preparations for his visit, while the kind nurse returned with all speed to the helpless woman whose pitiful condition had so strongly appealed to her warm Irish sympathies.

And not long did the worthy doctor delay in following her, but hastily making a few necessary preparations, and without once thinking of his breakfast, he stood in a few moments by the bedside of the dying woman—for dying she really was—and the first glance which the man of science cast upon the pallid face told him that he had been summoned too late, and that here all his science and all his skill were in vain—that his sympathy and proverbial kindness would now avail naught save, it might be, to smooth her passage

over the darkened river. The ghastly, ashen hue of death had already overspread her countenance, and her breathing was slow and labored, though she was still in the full possession of her senses, and could talk, but in a low tone and with some difficulty.

"Doctor," said she, feebly, recognizing him as soon as he took his seat at her bedside, "tell me truly, am I not dying?"

"To trifle with you at such a time as this were worse than useless," replied the kind-hearted old man; "you have but a few hours at most—perhaps only a few minutes—to live."

"I felt sure of it," she replied, calmly; "I was sure these feelings could portend nothing but immediate death, and for myself I do not fear to go. Life is but a sorrowful journey, and this world a sad place since my husband has gone and left me. But oh! doctor," and here her mother's love filled her heart and lent unwonted energy to her feeble tones, "what will become of my poor Mary when I am gone? Who will supply her mother's place and care for her as I would have done?"

"Have no fears upon her account, Mrs. Smith," replied the kind physician, his eyes melting as he spoke; "I will see that your little one is provided for."

"Oh! doctor," said the poor woman, half raising herself upon her elbow in the earnestness of her supplication, "you have no children—promise me that Mary shall become your child; that you

will take her to your own home and care for and educate her as you would if she were your own daughter. Promise me this, and I can die contented and happy. But to have her cast upon the cold charity of the world, with no place to call her home, and no one to care what becomes of her —I cannot bear to think of it. Will you not promise me?" she asked, with almost frantic eagerness, and fixing upon his face a look of imploring entreaty which he was powerless to resist.

"Yes, my good woman," replied the doctor in a tone which told how deeply he was moved by this passionate appeal, "I promise, and may heaven deal with me as I redeem that promise."

"Oh! doctor, what a weight you have taken from my mind, and now I can die contented. God bless you for that promise," said she, feebly, the sudden energy which had animated her passing away; and sinking back upon her pillow, in a few moments her bruised and worn spirit had taken its flight to join his whom she had so loved, and from whom she had been so long separated.

Dr. Brown was too much accustomed to scenes of death to be moved to any great extent by them; not so, however, the kind-hearted Irish landlady. In her simple, quiet life, she had witnessed but few exhibitions of the power of the dark angel, and she stood in silent awe till Mrs. Smith had ceased to breathe, when she burst into violent wailing and lamentation over the deceased, recounting in true Irish style her worth and her virtues. The doctor,

however, quieted her by sending her in search of Mary (for she had not been present during the last sad scences of the tragedy), and then giving the necessary directions for the funeral, took the little girl and started with her for his home, not, however, entirely easy in his mind as to the reception he would meet with upon his arrival there.

Although the kindness of Dr. Brown's heart was proverbial, he was yoked with a most uncongenial mate in the person of his wife. She was one of those rare specimens of feminine humanity in whose character kindness seemed to be entirely wanting—a haughty, overbearing woman of the world in her intercourse with society, and a termagant at home. She was never able to appreciate the motive which induced one to perform an act of disinterested charity and kindness, and seldom or never acted herself from any but the most sordid and selfish inducements. Her emotionless features and eyes, cold, gray, and hard as iron, were never lighted up in response to any ennobling or generous sentiment, and her heart never moved with any of the warmer or kindlier impulses of our nature. "Many a time and oft" had she rated the good doctor soundly for his constantly recurring deeds of charity and kindness, and on such occasions her sarcastic disposition led her to make remarks which she afterwards deeply regretted. It was the doctor's usual custom at such times to make no reply, but quietly putting on his hat he would leave the house and remain away until he judged

a sufficient time had elapsed for her passion to subside.

Now, however, he felt that this course would not answer. He had promised the dying woman that Mary should become a member of his family, and he felt that in order to fulfill that promise it would be necessary to face the storm of her wrath, however severe it might be, and to assert his authority in the premises; otherwise he felt sure Mary would be driven incontinently from the house. No wonder then that he dreaded meeting his virago of a wife, for he had long since learned to fear her sarcastic and venomous tongue.

And in this instance his apprehensions were not at fault. Mrs. Brown saw him before he reached the house, leading the little girl by the hand, and carrying under his arm the little bundle of clothing which belonged to her, and which the kind-hearted Irish landlady had put up for her, and the sight aroused all the termagant in her breast. She met him at the door.

"What beggar's brat have you got there? Another of your subjects of charity which you have picked up in the street, I suppose. Well, you need not bring her in here. Let her stay where she is till Kitty can get her a piece of bread, and then let her be off with herself, for I don't want her about here."

"This little girl's name is Mary Smith, and she is going to stay here," replied the doctor calmly

but firmly, for he knew the best way was to settle the matter at once.

"Who is Mary Smith, pray, and why is she going to stay here?" demanded the lady in a shrill voice, indicative of her anger at the audacity which had dared to propose such a thing.

"She is the daughter of William Smith, a poor but very worthy mechanic, who died some few years since, leaving his widow and this child in indigent circumstances. Since then Mrs. Smith has supported herself entirely with her needle, and this morning I stood by her dying bed and in her last moments promised her that Mary should have a home with me. And that promise will be kept," said the doctor, passing his irate lady and entering the house, still holding his little charge by the hand.

For a moment she could find no words in which to express her feelings. It had never entered her mind that the doctor had contemplated taking the little stranger to rear—the utmost she conceived was that some temporary charitable relief was to be afforded her, and that was amply sufficient to arouse her utmost indignation—but when she learned the whole truth she was so overwhelmed with astonishment at his presumption that for a short time she was utterly incapable of expressing her feelings. She followed him into the house.

"Well," said she at last, spitefully jerking out her words one after the other, "this is a delightful piece of business. I suppose it is not enough

for you to take care of your wife and your two children, but you must turn your house into an asylum for all the orphan beggars in the country."

"Madam," said the doctor, decidedly, "it is useless to remonstrate. I promised Mrs. Smith that her child should be taken care of, and she shall be."

"Then let her go to the asylum for the poor."

"Never while I live. It is useless to discuss this matter further. She is here and she will stay," replied he, with the air of a man who is fully decided and intends to shut off further controversy.

Not so the lady, however. She had been so long accustomed to have her own way, and to rule her husband with a rod of iron, that it seemed almost impossible for her to yield. But this time the doctor was immovable. His rebellion was complete and successful, and after much altercation Mary was formally installed as a member of Dr. Brown's household, but more in the capacity of a menial servant than an adopted daughter, as will appear in the course of this "over true tale."

Mary was at this time barely six years old, but the impression made upon her by this angry discussion, the whole of which took place in her presence and hearing, was never effaced from her recollection. From this time forth she, of course, looked upon Mrs. Brown as her bitterest enemy, and the doctor as her only friend and protector, and subsequent events proved that the childish

opinion she had then formed was correct, at least that portion of it relating to Mrs. Brown. But let us not anticipate.

As has already been stated, Mary was at this time six years of age. She was very small of her age, but a more engaging or interesting child is rarely met with. She had inherited all the beauty of her mother, while the contour of her head indicated that she possessed in an eminent degree the practical good sense and honest straightforwardness of purpose of her father. Her hair was dark and hung in ringlets to her shoulders, and with her dark hazel eyes, now lighted with mirth, anon melting with the affectionate, trusting, devoted love of innocent childhood, and again flashing with diminutive anger at some real or fancied trespass upon her rights or feelings, set off to the best advantage her glowing, fresh and blooming complexion. And added to these merely physical charms, the child possessed a look of intelligence and comprehension beyond her years, and altogether made up a picture of loveliness which always attracted a second glance from any one who saw her. Young as she was, her mother, realizing in her own person the evils of a defective education, had commenced a course of instruction in which Mary took a deep interest and displayed a precocity and capability of acquiring knowledge which gave promise of the brightest future for her. But alas! how vain are all merely human calculations. By the events in store for her, and which

will be unfolded in the course of our story, the brightness of her horizon was to be obscured by clouds so dense and dark that we contemplate them with shuddering horror, and only wonder that by the force of her own inherent purity and strength of character she was enabled to soar above them at the last, into an atmosphere of purity and nobleness which many whose lots have been cast in more propitious circumstances will vainly seek to emulate.

Mrs. Smith was buried, and, with the closing of the earth above her coffin, everything—save only the golden links of memory's chain—which bound Mary to her past life. Father and mother were both gone—other friends she had none—henceforth she was to know but the love of her adopted father and mother—the latter being such love as a sordid and brutal task-master metes out to those who are so unfortunate as to be the victims of his tyranny. But we will reserve for another chapter the events of the next two years of her life.

CHAPTER II.

TWO YEARS have passed away since the advent of Mary to the family of Dr. Brown. And during all that time Mrs. Brown has omitted no opportunity of manifesting the hatred and ill-will toward the child which she had conceived on the morning when she was first led home by Dr. Brown. Compelled to perform the most menial tasks, almost without intermission, from morning till night; clad in insufficient garments of the coarsest texture; beaten ofttimes with most merciless cruelty, for the most trivial offences of omission or commission; often punished for slight transgression by being starved during the entire day—her lot was in truth a most miserable one, and but for the love of her adopted father, and of the Irish cook, Kitty, upon whose susceptible heart her rare beauty and sweet, childish ways had made an indelible impression, her life would have been devoid of a single ray of sunlight. But Dr. Brown was much of the time from home, his large and lucrative practice demanding his constant attention, and besides he was powerless to restrain his wife in her systematic persecution of the helpless orphan. Old Kitty, too, though she often felt her blood boil at the injustice with which her little pet was treated, was unable to shield her. All she could do was to sympathize with her in secret, and at

times of starvation supply her by stealth with the food of which she was deprived by Mrs. Brown's unnatural and fiendish cruelty.

Dr. Bay was a professional rival of Dr. Brown's, but between them naught but the most friendly feelings ever existed. Both were well-educated, large-hearted men, equally devoted to their profession, and alike masters of the art of healing. And their rivalry was of the peculiar kind which, so far from producing any ill-feeling between them, but served to bind them more closely together. Neither was ever jealous of the success or envied the prosperity of the other—as good Dr. Brown used to say when his shrewish wife tried, as she often did, to excite some envious feelings toward his competitor in his mind, " the world was wide enough for both "—each felt this truth, and each was content to witness the prosperity of the other, rejoicing thereat as much as over his own.

Not so the ladies of the two households, however. Mrs. Bay on her part possessed the same generous and noble feelings which animated her husband, but the peculiarity of Mrs. Brown's disposition was such as to preclude all intercourse between them. Regarding Dr. Bay with feelings of the most intense hatred, as the rival and enemy of her husband, she could not treat with common respect any one connected with him; and despite Mrs. Bay's efforts to conciliate her friendship, her feelings had been so often and offensively displayed that the good lady had given up the

task in despair, and for a long time no intercourse had taken place between them, not even so much as speaking when they met by accident in the street.

One raw day in the early part of December, Mrs. Bay heard a child crying in a field near her house, which stood in the outskirts of the village. For a time she paid little attention to it, but her sympathies being at last aroused, she went into the field, and there, sitting upon the ground, crying and almost perishing with cold, she found our little heroine. She was barefooted and bareheaded, and had on but a thin calico gown, with no under-clothing of any kind.

"Why, my child," said the good-hearted lady, approaching her, "what is the matter, and what are you doing here?"

"Oh! lady," said the little girl, speaking with difficulty amid her sobs, "I came to drive home the cows, and I am so cold I cannot walk. What shall I do?"

"Come with me," said Mrs. Bay, her heart touched by the pitiful condition of the wretched little being before her, "and I will warm you and give you some clothes."

And as she spoke she took her by the hand and raised her to her feet, but she was so benumbed with cold that she could not stand. Mrs. Bay was now really alarmed, and hastily calling a servant she ordered him to carry the little girl to her house. She was in a most pitiable condition.

ters. But there was no help for it, and she sped on her way, assured of sympathy with her sufferings and delight at her good fortune from at least one person in the household. Honest old Kitty she knew would rejoice in her acquisitions, and to her she gave her first attention.

"Oh! Kitty, Kitty," she cried, bounding in highest glee into the kitchen where Kitty was at work; "see my new clothes. A warm flannel dress, and nice, warm skirts, and my new shoes and stockings. And, Kitty, see what a nice, warm hood and cloak. Don't I look nice? and, oh! I am so comfortable—I don't care for the cold now."

Old Kitty eyed her without speaking for a few moments. She was older than the little girl who was so much pleased with her improved personal appearance, and she could not share in her exultation. She had known Mrs. Brown a long time, and she anticipated a scene when she first saw the new clothes.

"Where have you been?" she said at last, "and where did you get all them nice things?"

"Oh, a rich lady gave them to me. I was sitting down in the cow-pasture and was most froze, and the lady came out from a nice brick house close by the pasture, and took me home with her and washed me and combed my hair, just as my mother used to, and then she put all these things on me and sent me home. Isn't she a nice lady? Oh! but I do love her."

But Kitty shook her head doubtingly. She

knew from the child's description of the place that it was Mrs. Bay who had thus befriended her, and knowing her mistress' feelings toward that lady, she feared that her well-meant kindness would result in anything but good to Mary. And she was right. Before she had time to reply, the door was thrown violently open, and Mrs. Brown entered.

"Well, you little huzzy!" said she, her eyes fairly blazing, "you have got back at last, have you? Where have you been? Begging, I should think. Where did you get those clothes you have on?" and she slapped the child first on one side of the head and then on the other.

Mary told her that a rich lady gave them to her, and wanted her to come and live with her.

At this Mrs. Brown was more enraged than ever, and again she turned upon the helpless child.

"Go this minute, and take off every stitch of that clothing," she fairly screamed. "Take off everything, and put on your own clothes. They are good enough for a beggar like you."

"Madam," said Mary, turning her own bright eyes, which now flashed like lightning, full upon Mrs. Brown's face, "I will not take off these clothes, and you dare not make me do it. It was Mrs. Dr. Bay who gave them to me, and if you make me take them off I will run away and go and live with her. And you know very well what she would think of you."

This threat was not without its effect. Intensely

as Mrs. Brown hated Mrs. Bay, she did not care about taking the risk of sending Mary back to her stripped of her bounty, and she forebore to press the matter.

"Go, rock Ella, you imp," she cried, "and do not let me hear a word out of your head. And bear in mind," she hissed through her clinched teeth, with the look and accent of a demon, "you are not to have a bite of dinner or supper, and when you go to bed to-night I will settle with you for your impudence. Go and rock the cradle, and if you let Ella cry, I will skin you alive."

And to her sorrow poor Mary found that Mrs. Brown was indulging in no idle threat, for the day wore away—dinner time and supper time came, but no morsel of food passed the lips of the half-famished child. Her tyrant mistress still burned with wrath against her, and was determined to vent that wrath even though the child were starved to death in so doing. But still her victim's heart was light. She remembered Mrs. Bay's kind words and tender tones, and she felt sure Kitty would bring her some supper as soon as she could do so without Mrs. Brown's knowledge. Nine o'clock came and Mary was sent to her own room with the assurance that she should have a horse-whipping as soon as she was undressed. And, true to her demonaic promise, Mrs. Brown repaired to her room armed with a large cowhide, and there, upon the person of that helpless girl of eight years of age, was enacted a scene of brutality which would

make the veriest slave driver who ever trod southern soil blush with shame. Detaining Mary with one hand, despite her screams, struggles and appeals for mercy, she plied the whip with the other until the child ceased to struggle, and the blood was flowing in streams from her lacerated back and shoulders, when flinging her from her to one corner of the room, she repaired to her own room and there slept as calmly as though nothing unusual had transpired.

No sooner had she left the room than Kitty, who had been listening with the most agonized feelings to the scene being enacted within, entered, and spoke to the child, who still lay where Mrs. Brown in her brutal rage had thrown her. But no answer was returned. Helpless, motionless she lay—not even a groan attested the intensity of her sufferings. Kitty was terrified beyond measure, and raising the lifeless body in her arms, she flew through the streets in the direction of Dr. Bay's residence. Arriving there she rang the bell with an energy and vehemence which startled the doctor and his good lady, who were about retiring for the night. As soon as the door was opened Kitty rushed in, and depositing her lifeless burden on a sofa, exclaimed with true Irish warmth:

"She is dead, and Mrs. Brown has murdered her. She shall hang for it if my evidence is sufficient to have justice done her."

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ure before her as the object of her bounty in the earlier part of the day, and was so much horror-stricken as to be incapable of thought or action. The doctor was more composed, and advancing to the inanimate form, he proceeded to make an examination which soon convinced him that she was not dead but had only fainted, and he at once set to work to administer the proper restoratives, Kitty meanwhile returning to her own home. It was some time before Mary opened her eyes, and when she did she was found to be in a light fever, and for a long time her recovery was by the doctor and his good lady considered very doubtful, but by the most unwearied attention and careful nursing she was at length restored to complete health, when she was formally adopted by Dr. Bay, with the sanction of the orphans' court.

But to return for a brief period to Mrs. Brown. The next morning after her brutal treatment of Mary, when the girl failed to make her appearance at the usual hour, she went in great wrath to call her, intending to visit her with still further chastisement for her contumacy, as she was pleased to term it, but to her astonishment she was nowhere to be found. Suspecting that Kitty, whom she knew had protected her on several occasions from threatened violence, was responsible for this disappearance, she repaired at once to the kitchen and demanded of that worthy her whereabouts, to which Kitty replied:

"Shure, ma'am, and she be dead. You killed

her in that awful batin' you gave her last night, and I'll soon see your ladyship hung for the foul murder."

Of course Mrs. Brown did not believe a word of it, and she was on the point of giving Kitty "a piece of her mind," when, without ringing the bell, or other ceremony, an officer entered the room, and walking up to Mrs. Brown laid his hand on her shoulder.

"You are my prisoner," said he, and producing a warrant for her arrest he proceeded to read it in her hearing, but before it was finished she had fainted and fallen to the floor, for she saw in this advent of the officer only the verification of the prediction to which her servant had just given vent. She was, however, soon restored to her senses, and, entering a carriage with the officer, in company with her husband, was driven to the office of a magistrate, Kitty being at the same time taken along as a witness. On arriving there they found Dr. Bay waiting for them, for it was at his instance that the warrant had been issued, and from him Mrs. Brown learned that Mary was not dead.

She was formally charged by Dr. Bay (for so strongly were his feelings aroused by her brutality that not even his friendship for Dr. Brown could restrain him) with a brutal and outrageous assault upon Mary, and the trial proceeded. Kitty testified to the violence of the beating: that it was done with a large horsewhip, and that when Mrs.

Brown left her, she (witness) had carried her to the house of Dr. Bay, supposing her at the time to be dead. Dr. Bay deposed to her being brought to his house about ten o'clock at night by Kitty, insensible and covered with blood; that one of her ribs was broken, her back frightfully lacerated, one eye severely injured as if by a blow from a whip, and other serious injuries on her person. He further testified that she was very ill from the effects of the beating, and that he regarded her recovery as somewhat doubtful.

The defense was insanity, and Dr. Brown's wealth, and his wife's peculiarities of temper and disposition were sufficient to establish it, and she went scot free, much to the disgust of good, honest Kitty, who persisted in loudly protesting that "the haythin who would bate such a swate child as she had Mary, ought to be hung anyway." Of course it could not be expected that she would remain with Mrs. Brown after the feeling she had displayed in regard to this prosecution, and she, too, went to make her home with Mrs. Bay.

CHAPTER III.

For the next few years the life of Mary presents no incidents of special interest. As has already been stated, Dr. Bay had adopted her with all the formalities of the law, and she soon learned to regard them (as we will hereafter call them,) as her parents, and surely their treatment of her was all that she could have anticipated or wished had they been her own instead of her adopted parents. Their means enabled them to gratify every proper wish of hers, and in their kind and judicious conduct towards her they soon effaced from her guileless spirit the recollections of the cruelty of her former mistress.

It must not be understood by the reader that Dr. and Mrs. Bay at all times and under all circumstances complied with the wishes of their child without regard to their reasonableness—far from it. Although they poured out upon her the full measure of their hearts' affection, their good sense and discretion were too great to permit them to fall into the error, so often committed by parents, of regarding her will and her inclination, however capricious, as the first thing to be considered at all times.

There are two classes of parents in the world, either of which wholly fail to comprehend their duty in the rearing and education of their off-

spring. Indeed, it seems sometimes as though their special mission was to ruin their children, body and soul forever, instead of fitting them for true happiness here and hereafter. No better schemes could be devised than those adopted by the two classes to which reference is here made, and both of which are equally pernicious in their results.

The first class are those who deem it a sufficient reason for refusing or condemning anything, simply that their children desire or affect it, who make it a point never to comply with the wishes of their offspring when they can possibly avoid it, whose whole code of family government is tinged with almost the severity of the Draconian laws, who appeal to no higher motive to secure the obedience and duty of their children than their sense of fear, who tell you gravely that a child's spirit must be broken ere you can control it, and whose favorite admonition to their offspring is, "If you do that again, I'll skin you alive!" Oh! beware, parents, how you adopt this cruel and cheerless system of government. Be assured that if you do, it will be entirely owing to the providence of God if your child does not "bring down your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." By your systematic thwartings of his childish inclinations and desires you cow his temper, and by the constant and unnecessarily severe exercise of your authority, you turn the sentiment, which otherwise would be the purest and most enduring love,

springing up into everlasting life in his little heart, into something very much resembling the smouldering fire of hate, scorching and consuming all his better nature, and in time he comes (and very justly, too,) to regard you as his most indefatigable enemy instead of the true friend and counselor and guide that you should be. And when this point has been reached, your child is ready for any deed of evil, all the more readily embraced and performed because he knows that he is thereby running counter to your wishes.

How often have we heard fathers say—aye, and mothers, too—and not unfrequently in the hearing of their children, "I do believe mine are the worst children in the world. It really seems as though they tried to go contrary to my express wishes in everything." Ah! father and mother, examine your own conduct towards those whom you censure so bitterly, and see if they have not some reason to say the same of you. Have you never, capriciously and without reason, checked their innocent, harmless, childish amusement, and wrung their little hearts with sorrow without any motive which they could understand, or without any cause save that you had the power, and could thereby show your authority over them? Have you never sternly and abruptly refused any request, the granting of which would have made your child infinitely happy and caused no inconvenience or injury to yourself or any one else, merely because you happened to be in bad humor, because some-

thing in your business affairs had gone wrong, or for some other reason totally disconnected with family affairs, or for no reason at all? Have you never punished your children with unreasonable severity for something entirely harmless in itself, and which you only chose to construe into some contempt of your authority? If you have done these things constantly and regularly, depend upon it, there lies the secret of your children being so much worse than your neighbor's.

It is far from being our purpose to advocate the theory that parents should never exercise any authority or restraint over their children. This were a fault equally pernicious with the one we have been considering, and this leads us to spenk of that other class to which allusion has already been made.

They are those, not unfrequently met, who seem at all times and under all circumstances to regard the inclinations of their children as *suprema lex*, who are never able to say "no!" to anything the child may ask, who visit the most heinous offenses, or the most direct violations of parental authority with no punishment of greater severity than a few words of gentle remonstrance, which, from the tone and manner of their delivery, have, beyond the moment in which they are uttered, no effect upon the child, who straightway repeats his offense, and again receives the same punishment. The child, trained and educated in this way, in due time comes to regard his own will, as his par-

ents have done before him, as the only guide to his actions, and when this point has been reached, this child, like the other, is on the high road to ruin. For in time he will come to apply this same principle to his intercourse with the world beyond his own family circle, and then let it occasion no surprise if he end his career in the prison or on the gibbet.

Between these two extremes lies the happy mean where the will of the parent, not capricious and not uncontrolled, but tempered with reason, judgment, justice and a due regard for the feeling and frailties of childhood, is the standard, where a mixture of love and firmness, sustained at all times by the most perfect truthfulness toward the child, are the means used to induce, and, if need be, to enforce obedience; where the parent deals with the child as though both were reasonable beings, and never suffers his action to be influenced by passion or prejudice, but calmly hears and judges; where punishment of any kind, when necessary, is inflicted by the parent with moderation and kindness, ever from a sense of duty, and not in a spirit of vindictiveness or revenge, and in that mode and to that extent only which, in the judgment of the parent, is best calculated to effect the object in view: the correction of the error into which the child has fallen. No parent ever yet successfully governed a child unless he occupied just this mean, and had the most perfect control of his temper when dealing with his children, and

this was just the position occupied by Dr. Bay and his excellent wife.

Under their kind and judicious training Mary grew up; and as circling years added development to her form and strength to her intellect, she was the delight and pride of her adopted parents, and won the love of all who knew her. The education which had been begun by her mother, but which had been almost totally neglected at Mrs. Brown's, was resumed by Mrs. Bay, and she displayed the same capacity and fondness for the acquisition of knowledge which had marked her earlier years. And thus she went on, each day adding something to the stores of her mind, until she had attained the age of fourteen years, when it was decided by her parents to send her to a boarding-school to complete her education. Oh! fatal determination. Could they have foreseen what the consequences of this ill-advised step would be, how much rather would they have seen her enclosed in "the narrow house appointed for all the living," than have thus sent her out from beneath the sheltering folds of their affectionate protection.

As for Mary, she was almost wild with delight at the thought of going to school. True, it would involve separation from her much loved parents, and this reflection gave a tinge of sadness to her otherwise radiant visions, but there she would indulge her brightest anticipations relative to the acquisition of learning, and fully slake her thirst

at the fountain of knowledge, and to one of her temperament and disposition, this were an ample compensation for all the pangs of separation. She therefore eagerly embraced the proposition, made by her mother, to go to a private boarding-school, kept by a Mr. and Mrs. Shepley, in the town of Huntingdon, something over one hundred miles from her home, and for the next two or three weeks she was very busy with preparations for her journey. The doctor, meanwhile, had corresponded with the principal of the school and secured her admission there, and all arrangements were made for her becoming an inmate of the institution at the opening of the fall term, which begun in September.

At last came the time for her to leave her dearly loved and cherished home, and for the first time Mary regarded with something of regret the change she was about making, and with a sort of indefinable dread looked forward to the period when she should be deprived of her mother's guardian care and watchfulness. Was it a presentiment of coming evil? Slowly and sadly she wandered about the house, taking a last look at every dear place upon which memory would fondly linger in her hours of absence, and bidding farewell to all the pets from which she was to be so long separated. And when she finally entered the carriage to be driven to the railway station, it was with difficulty that she restrained her tears, notwithstanding the presence of her parents, both of whom were to

accompany her to her new home. She felt as if she was leaving forever all that was dear to her in this world, to enter upon a new and untried sphere, of whose danger and toils she was entirely ignorant, and which she would be compelled to encounter without the support and guidance of that maternal affection which had been her stay and her shield for the last six years. What wonder that in her inmost soul she shrank from the encounter?

In due time they arrived at the town of Huntingdon, and Mary was introduced in form to the proprietors of her new home. The school was very pleasantly located, and Mary was charmed with the kind and genial bearing of Mr. and Mrs. Shepley. They were old acquaintances of Dr. Bay—a circumstance of which Mary had till then been ignorant—and this fact, added to the attractions of the place, and their evident kindness and disposition to make her comfortable, did much to dispel the gloom which had hung around her upon her arrival.

Mr. and Mrs. Bay remained over night at the school, completed the few arrangements necessary to insure, as they fondly supposed, her comfort and welfare, and then with a tender kiss of parental love and affection, left her for home. And it was when they were gone that Mary felt in all its force the loneliness of her situation. She was among entire strangers—the mother upon whom she was wont to lean for advice and encourage-

ment was far away, and she, with all her inexperience of the world and all her ignorance of the dangers and temptations which could beset her, must now stand or fall alone. But Mr. and Mrs. Shepley proved themselves to be friends indeed, and she very soon came to feel herself quite at home and at her ease with them.

She was to remain at this school for three years, only visiting her home during vacations. The time seemed very long, but then she would hear from them often, could visit them two or three times during each year, and would she not be fully compensated in the end by the splendid education she was determined to achieve during the time? So Mary reasoned within herself, and thus reasoning she quietly settled down to her allotted tasks, fully resolved that, if by any effort of hers it could be prevented, her parents should never have occasion to regret having sent her there.

Her parents meantime returned home, but very sad and lonely seemed the old house. The very sunlight seemed to have gone out of it with the departure of Mary. Her voice was no longer heard gayly caroling as she skipped from room to room; her eager, gladsome face and bright smile no longer greeted the old doctor as he returned in the evening from his daily round of visits, and ever and anon Mrs. Bay found herself starting into the garden in search of her lost darling. Her husband was much of the time away from home, and this loneliness became at last so insupport-

able to Mrs. Bay that she sent for a nephew of the doctor's to come and make his home with them.

Henry Bay was at this time about twenty-one years of age, and was a fine-looking, well-educated young man. He was the son of a deceased brother of the doctor; had been left an orphan very young by the death of both his parents within a few weeks of each other; had been reared by them, and was a great favorite of Mrs. Bay. He had seen Mary once when he was on a visit to his uncle and aunt at a time when she was about ten years old, but he had but little recollection of her, and when Mrs. Bay in her letter to him told him that Mary had left them for a time, he could hardly remember for the moment who Mary was.

Mrs. Bay's letter reached him at a most opportune moment. He had been for some time engaged in the study of the law, and had pursued it with so much energy and avidity as seriously to impair his health, and render relaxation for a time a matter of absolute necessity. He therefore determined to accept her invitation without delay, at least for a season, and, bidding adieu to Coke and Blackstone, to endeavor to regain in the salubrious clime of Western Pennsylvania the health which was so necessary to the successful preservation of the plan he had marked out for his future career. And in due time he arrived at Kittaning, where he was welcomed by Mrs. Bay with as much earnestness as if he had been her own, in-

stead of merely her foster-son, and immediately installed in the best room of the mansion.

"Why, Harry," said the old lady, when the first warm greeting was over, "how tall and manly you have grown. But you ought to be ashamed of yourself for staying away as long as you have. Just to think, it is four years since you were here, and poor Mary inquiring every few days when cousin Harry was coming again."

"Now, my good aunt-mother," said the young man, laughing, "don't commence your flattery so soon, or I shall surely leave Kittaning and hasten back to Philadelphia by the first train. Your love is very grateful to me, and the thing I most highly prize on earth, but I cannot stand flattery."

"Are you very sure the love of your aunt-mother, as you call her, is the one most highly prized by you?" said the old lady, archly. "Are you sure there is not some other love prized as high or higher than hers?"

"Indeed I am, my dear mother," he replied, kindly and reverently taking her hand and press-it to his lips. "No one ever has or ever can divide your empire over my heart, my more than mother," said he, his eyes moistening at the recollection of all her goodness to him in days past and gone.

The good lady felt her own eyes moisten as she marked the humidity of his, and hastily turning away without further remark she sought her own room, there to pour out her soul in thankfulness

to the Father of all for having so blessed to his eternal good the teachings which she had striven long years before to instill into his youthful mind. Verily she had cast her bread upon the waters, and now, after many days, it was returned to her again, with more than four-fold increase.

CHAPTER IV.

When Mary had been at school about two months, Mrs. Bay concluded, in company with Harry, to pay her a visit, partly because she wanted to see how she was getting along, and partly because she desired to renew the acquaintance between the two young people. For, mere child as Mary still was, Mrs. Bay had already indulged a hope, or, perhaps to speak more precisely, a wish, that she might at some day be related to her by other and dearer ties than those of adoption. Let no one accuse the good old lady of being a match-maker, for she was not, but she loved both her foster children dearly, and would have done anything to promote their welfare and happiness. She knew them both good and pure and noble, and felt that their dispositions were such as would suit each other, and if they should happen to love and finally wed, she felt assured then, and consequently her happiness would be enhanced thereby. Let no one, therefore, condemn her for this innocent attempt to further the dearest wish of her heart.

Notice of the intended visit and of the day of their arrival was dispatched to Mary, and in due time Harry and his "aunt mother" arrived at the railroad depot in Huntingdon, where they found

Mary awaiting them, accompanied by one of the teachers of the school, a Miss Davilla, and a very intelligent, sensible girl. As soon as the ceremony of introduction had been mutually performed, they entered the Shepley carriage, which was in waiting, and in a few minutes were set down at the boarding-house, where a hearty welcome and warm supper awaited them. But nothing could exceed the astonishment of Harry Bay at the change in Mary's appearance. He only remembered her as a sprightly little elf of ten years, whose merry grimaces and quaint mirth were sufficient at any time to upset the utmost degree of gravity he might assume, and he had expected to find her, although about fifteen, still a little girl wearing short dresses, playing with dolls and the like. Nay, he had even gone so far as to provide himself with sundry and divers childish presents with which to win his way to her infantile heart, and when, instead of the little sprite which his fancy had conjured up, he beheld a tall and graceful young woman, beautiful as a Hebe, and of almost queenly bearing, he was so overwhelmed with surprise as hardly to be able to treat her with ordinary gallantry and politeness. And anon occurred to him the recollection of the ridiculous character of the presents he had provided for her, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he restrained himself from laughing in her face, as they sat opposite each other at tea table.

When the meal was finished and they had with-

drawn to the sitting-room, Mary challenged her cousin, as she called Harry, although in no degree related to him, to a game of draughts, saying laughingly that he used to beat her badly, but now she thought she was a match for him. He accepted her good-natured challenge and they withdrew to one corner of the room while Mr. and Mrs. Shepley, Mrs. Bay and Miss Davilla seated themselves near the fire and engaged in conversation. While they were arranging the men, Mary asked, in a low tone:

"What was the matter with you at the tea table, cousin Harry? I observed that you were very much amused at something, and am very anxious to know what you found in our really very pleasant home to excite your mirth to such a degree."

"It was nothing that I found here. I was only laughing at my own thoughts," replied Harry, somewhat confusedly, and coloring slightly, for he had hoped that no one had noticed his unintentional display.

"And pray, of what were you thinking?" persisted Mary. "You must tell me so that I can share your merriment, for I dearly love to laugh," said she, breaking into a little ripple of mirth which Harry thought was the sweetest music he had ever heard. For it must be confessed that Mary's rare beauty had sadly enchanted him, and that even in this brief time he had fallen deeply in love with his "fair cousin."

Harry at first refused to gratify her curiosity,

but so persistently did she urge him to the revelation, that at last he made a clean breast of the whole matter—told her he had pictured her as a little girl in short dresses, what preparations he had made to win her esteem, and all that, and that when, instead of a little girl, he had found a beautiful young woman, the ridiculousness of his position had come across his mind, and caused the ill-concealed mirth she had witnessed. It was now her time to be embarrassed for a moment, but she speedily rallied and insisted that he should give her the presents, notwithstanding the mistake, saying she would always keep them as mementos of the best and most gallant cousin any one ever had. "And now," said she, "that matter is fully and amicably settled."

But her merriment only confused Harry the more, and he muttered something about "not feeling very well," which Mary at once understood as a mere excuse.

"I will see what is the matter," said Mrs. Bay, coming up and seating herself by the side of the young man. "Why, Harry, what does ail you?" she continued pleasantly. They continued in conversation for several minutes, when some one suggested it was bedtime, and they separated to their respective rooms. But it was long before poor Harry could compose himself to sleep. His mind was full of Mary, and it soon became apparent to himself that he was hopelessly in love with her. The vision of her bright

beauty was constantly before him, enchanting his senses and obscuring every other object, while her innocence and childish sweetness, and the high character given her by Mrs. Bay, had completed the captivity. Of course he had no thought of marrying her at present—she was too young to assume the relation of wife—but before yielding himself to the influences of the drowsy god, he had fully made up his mind to woo, and, if possible, win her when her school term should have expired. And with this resolve firmly fixed in his mind he sought his pillow and was soon in the land dreams.

The thoughts of Mary were far different from those of Mr. Bay, as she sought her room that night. Her chief feeling was one of disappointment because Mr. Bay had not accompanied the party from her home. Not that she loved him any better than she did her mother, but when she was informed of the contemplated visit, no intimation had been given of his remaining at home, and she had fully expected to see him. And thus expecting, she had prepared a little memento of filial affection in the shape of a finely-embroidered necktie, and after all he did not come. The excuse given by her mother for his absence, although a very good one, was far from setting her mind at ease. A violent and fearful epidemic was raging in the vicinity of Kittaning, and numerous deaths were the result of its visitation, and the doctor felt that his duty to his patrons

forbade his leaving home, even for a very short period, and though she realized and appreciated the motive which kept him at home, her disappointment was none the less keen, and besides, what assurance had she that, thus mingling constantly with the fatal disease, he would not himself fall a victim to its malignity?

While she was thus musing upon this subject, her thoughts were interrupted by a low tap at the door, and upon opening it she was somewhat surprised to find Mrs. Bay.

"Why, mamma," said she, opening wide her brilliant hazel eyes with surprise, "I supposed you were asleep long before this time."

"Oh, no, my daughter, I thought I would come and sleep with you," replied her mother.

"I am so glad you did, dear mamma," replied the loving girl; "I wanted to have a good, quiet visit with you before you went home, and now is just the time."

Long time the mother and daughter passed in loving converse ere they yielded themselves to the influence of Morpheus. Mrs. Bay had many inquiries to make of Mary regarding her new home, the school, the progress she was making in her studies, and the like, and Mary on her part was none the less desirous of learning everything that had taken place in and about Kittaning since the day when, almost in tears, she had bid it adieu, as it then seemed to her, forever. After all ques-

tions on these subjects had been asked and answered, Mrs. Bay said:

"Well, my dear child, how do you like your cousin Harry?"

"Oh! really, I think he is splendid. He is so good-looking, and I am sure he is as good and kind as he looks," replied Mary, enthusiastically. "And then I am sure he is in love with Miss Davilla. Do you remember how he blushed when I only mentioned her name? I really wish they might love each other, for she is such a sweet girl."

"You are very much mistaken about his being in love with her," said Mrs. Bay, quietly. "He has hardly spoken to her or looked at her since he has been here. But who and what is she?"

"As you are already aware, she is one of the teachers in the school, and she is a sister of Mrs. Shepley. She has considerable property in her own right, but teaches from pure love of teaching. It is not necessary that she should follow this vocation, but her whole heart is in it, and hence she does."

"And doubtless she succeeds admirably. It is certain to be the case in any vocation. Whoever goes to any pursuit with a feeling as if he were being driven into it by necessity or other cause, against his will, rarely succeeds, while one who regards his occupation more in the light of a pleasure than a duty, will as rarely fail. There may be, and doubtless are, instances of men who have engaged in some given occupation from a

strong sense of duty, and have met with a reasonable degree of success; but the general rule is as I have stated, and it will be found that where one has succeeded in an eminent degree in any vocation adopted from a sense of duty, that sense of duty has been so strong as to render obedience to its dictates a pleasure. But," said Mrs. Bay, changing the subject, "who is the young gentleman who sat opposite you at the tea table? I believe no one thought to introduce him to me."

"Oh! that was Mr. Jones, another one of the teachers, or rather the assistant superintendent of the school," replied Mary.

"Do you like him?" asked Mrs. Bay, quietly.

"Yes," replied Mary, "I like him very well. He is very well educated and very entertaining, and seems to be a very excellent young man, and is a general favorite in the school."

"He may be all that you have painted him," replied Mrs. Bay, seriously, "but my heart sadly misgives me that you are mistaken. There is something in his general appearance I do not like, and on one or two occasions I thought I detected in his countenance a sort of cold, cynical expression, indicative of selfishness and hypocrisy. He is not such a man as I would select for an intimate friend until I had tested him thoroughly. It is true I know nothing of him, and it may be that I speak from some unaccountable prejudice against him—some aversion for which there is no just cause."

"I am quite sure, dear mamma, that such is the case," replied the girl. "No one connected with the school is more highly esteemed by all than he, and I am sure your dislike has no foundation whatever. So please dismiss it, my dear mother. I think very highly of him, and I do not want my dear mamma to dislike any of my teachers," said Mary, kissing her mother tenderly.

"It may be as you say," replied Mrs. Bay, quite mollified by the caress. "I will try and dismiss my prejudice against him, in the face of your earnest defense. I trust my little daughter has too much sense to be imposed upon, and of course you know much more of him than I do."

"You will find, dear mother, that in this one instance you are wrong and I am right," replied the girl, with another affectionate kiss. "If you ever become well acquainted with him you will like him as much as you dislike him now."

"It may be," said the old lady; "and now shall we go to sleep? I have some headache and fear I will not be quite well in the morning, if I lie awake all night."

"Then by all means let us go to sleep. Good-night, mamma," said the loving girl with another kiss.

"Good-night, my daughter, and may He who watches even the sparrows as they fall, ever have you in His holy keeping," said the old lady, fervently, and in a few moments she was sound asleep.

But although Mary had consented very readily to a discontinuance of the conversation, for she had her secret in regard to William Jones which she did not care to reveal to her mother (fatal mistake!), she slept not for a long time. The conversation with her mother had awakened a train of thought which would not down at her bidding, and which for hours resisted the advances of the drowsy god as he sought in vain to enfold her in his strong embrace. She was thinking of her first intimate acquaintance with Jones; of her mother's prejudice against him; how unreasonable it seemed to her, and last, but by no means least, she was trying to analyze her own feelings toward him. But we will leave her thus for a moment, while, as William Jones will play a very important part in this narrative, we give the reader a more particular introduction to him.

William Jones was an orphan and a distant relative of Mr. Shepley. He was born in the State of New York, and at the time of his presentation to the reader was about twenty-seven years of age. His father was the pastor of a small country parish, a very worthy and learned man, while his mother was a pious, God-fearing woman, and they had taken great pains in his young days to lay the foundation in his mind of a good education, and had sought earnestly to instill into his heart the purest precepts of morality and piety. But country clergymen seldom amass much property, and when his parents died, within about six months of

each other, their son was left, at the age of about fourteen years, a penniless orphan. In this dilemma a brother of Mrs. Jones, a merchant in the great city of New York, took the boy into his family, and as William had great aptitude for learning anything he attempted, he sent him to school, intending to fit him for some one of the learned professions. But the uncle was too much immured in the labyrinths of business to give much attention to the moral culture of the boy—he imagined that when he boarded, clothed and lodged him, and paid without murmuring his quarterly tuition bills, he was doing his full duty—and in that gigantic school and stronghold of vice, the commercial metropolis, the precepts of his father and mother, unrefreshed and uninforced, were but a feeble protection. He was just at the age when boys are most susceptible of evil influences, and but a short time elapsed until he could handle cards, throw dice, toss off a bumper of whisky, or take the name of his Maker in vain as readily as any of his reckless associates.

Nor were these the only vices in which he indulged. The painted and bedizened wretches—lowest beings in the scale of humanity—who daily and nightly flaunt upon Broadway, luring to swift destruction thousands of the brightest and best of our land, soon ensnared him, and the triumph of vice and infamy over his soul was complete. And, as a natural consequence, even the generous allowance of pocket money afforded by his uncle was

all too small to supply his wants, and he resorted to pilfering from his uncle's cash drawer to supply his deficiencies. At last, however, his demands became so extravagant that he could no longer rely upon this source, and in an evil hour he forged his uncle's name to a check for five hundred dollars. Of course the forgery was soon discovered, and, though for family reasons his uncle declined to prosecute him and hushed the matter up as much as possible, his stay there was at an end. Giving him a small sum of money, and sternly forbidding him ever to show his face in his house again, the uncle sent him adrift into the wide, wide world to do for himself or starve as might be.

Had a different course been pursued, his reformation might have been effected, but his uncle was a man of too much austerity, and of too stern integrity himself to overlook or suffer anything to mitigate in the slightest degree such a departure from the path of rectitude as this. He, therefore, instead of stretching out his hand to his erring kinsman, and endeavoring to lift him from the slough of infamy into which he had fallen, with harsh words and frowning brow drove him forth under circumstances which were almost sure to accomplish the ruin already begun.

The reader will, no doubt, and justly too, censure the harsh spirit which impelled the uncle thus to drive his nephew apparently to irretrievable ruin, but wherein does his course differ from that of society in general? Let any one, under

any circumstances, make a single false step or deviate in the slightest particular from the strict line of rectitude, and though he may have possessed before the purity of an angel, the memory of former goodness is at once obliterated and naught is remembered or spoken of in the community but the transgression. Even professed followers of the Lamb of God, instead of "going about doing good" to the weak and erring, as was the wont of their Divine Master during his pilgrimage on earth, repulse with coldest scorn the suppliant who, conscious of his own weakness, implores assistance on his halting way, and with a few words of heartless and meaningless advice dismiss the poor mendicant, thanking God, as did the Pharisee of old, that they are "not like this poor publican." Gentle woman, too, whose noblest mission on earth is to refine and elevate frail humanity, when brought in contact with sin and degradation, especially among her own sex, forgets the work assigned to her here and the Divine injunction, and gathering her robes about her person to avoid contamination, says to the erring one, "Pass on. I am more holy than thou," goes her way and straightway forgets the appeal which has been made to her higher and nobler feelings. Oh! how much of misery, and sorrow, and suffering would be saved to the human family if people would but obey the Divine command, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, do ye even so unto them." And who can venture to say how many

precious souls have been driven, by the scorn and implacability of society, into the realms of eternal darkness beyond the grave, which might, by a different course, have been made precious jewels in the diadem of our Heavenly Redeemer? But to return to our narrative.

For the next few years the life of William Jones was a wild and stormy one. With no fixed place of abode, without any settled vocation, wandering from place to place, and living by his wits, there was scarcely any form of vice or immorality in which he did not freely indulge.

Meantime, Mr. Shepley had founded his school and had advertised for competent teachers to fill the several departments. One of these advertisements chanced to meet the eye of William Jones, and he instantly formed a resolution to change entirely his habits and mode of life. As has been already intimated, he was possessed of a very good education, although he had never graduated at any institution of learning, and he determined to apply to this distant relative for a situation. Hastily concocting a story to account for his being out of employment, he made the best of his way to Huntingdon, passed a satisfactory examination, and in due time was admitted a member of Mr. Shepley's family, and a teacher of the new school. Time passed, and at the advent of Mary to the school, he had been connected with it about five years, and had been promoted from a mere teacher to the position of assistant superintendent, and

during all that time he had never once been known to stray from the path of rectitude. True, he had occasionally indulged in some of his former vices, but so carefully had he concealed his derelictions under the cloak of religion (vile hypocrite that he was,) that no one about the school suspected anything of his true character, and all accorded to him the same reputation which Mary had given him in her conversation with her mother. But alas! how cruelly were they all to be undeceived, for the vile instincts of his mind were not eradicated—they were only concealed, and were destined to burst forth at a future time with consuming violence.

His first acquaintance with Mary, aside from that which must necessarily exist between teacher and pupil, had been on this wise. The family had gone out to a tea party and Mary went down to the parlor to cheer her loneliness with some music, for she had been thinking of the dear ones at home, and her heart was very mellow. As she finished a piece of music a voice behind exclaimed, "Beautiful!" Wheeling around in surprise, for she had not heard any one enter, she beheld Mr. Jones, and would have fled from the room but that he besought her so earnestly to stay, saying he was lonesome and wished she would charm the evil spirit away from him.

"Why, Mr. Jones," said Mary, "I thought you had gone to the tea party."

"No," said he, "I had a headache and begged

them to excuse me. And right glad am I that I stayed at home since it resulted in such a treat as you have just favored me with, though unintentionally."

"If you flatter my poor performance, intended only for myself," said she, laughingly, "I will at once retire to my own room and leave you to the solitude which the flatterer deserves."

"Well, Miss Mary, if you will sit down I will promise not to say a word which can be construed into flattery," said he, politely, placing a chair for her, which she accepted. "And now," he continued, "what shall we do to pass away the time? Do you play at draughts?"

"I used to play some with papa and cousin Harry," she replied, "but I do not play any more."

"I am very fond of the game," said he, "shall we play?"

"No, I will never play again."

This settled the matter. Jones gave her a sketch of his life, omitting only such parts as might have a tendency to injure him in her mind, for he had already in his own base heart formed the deliberate determination to ruin her if within his power. He told her of his orphanage, the hardships (as he pictured them,) he had endured since, and all that sort of thing, and said:

"I do not suppose, Miss Mary, you have ever thought what it is to lose a kind and loving mother. I thank God you have never had any such experience."

"Indeed, Mr. Jones, you are very much mistaken," said she, her beautiful eyes filling with tears at the thought; "I am, like yourself, an orphan. My father I do not remember at all, and my mother, who died when I was six years old, I can but just remember. Dr. and Mrs. Bay are only my adopted parents, though I am sure they are as kind to me as my own parents could have been had they lived, and as such I love them."

Their mutual orphanage at once created a bond of sympathy between them, and from that time they were familiar friends. Jones told Mary he had neither brother nor sister, and asked her to be a sister to him, and she in turn had requested him to assume the relation of brother to her, and thus they had pledged themselves to each other just the evening before Mrs. Bay and Harry came to see her. Poor Mary! Had she known the dire influence which this friendship, this fraternal arrangement, was to have upon her future life—how it was to blast and wither the bright hopes which then clustered thick around the morning of her life, how would she have recoiled from it. But the future was hidden from her view—no doubt wisely so—and full of trust and confidence and hope, she went forward to her doom.

CHAPTER V.

When Mary awoke the next morning, she was surprised to see her mother already dressed and sitting by the window reading the Bible. She glanced at the little ormolu clock on the mantel, and to her astonishment found that it was nearly eight o'clock. Suddenly starting up in bed she attracted the attention of her mother, who turned and accosted her.

"Good-morning, my daughter. I am afraid Mrs. Shepley is spoiling you by too much indulgence. You were not wont before coming here to lie in bed as late as this. I think I must tell Mrs. Shepley not to let you sleep later than six o'clock."

"Oh! mamma," she replied, "I usually rise at or before six, but it was late when I went too sleep last night. And besides this is the Sabbath morning, and everybody lies in bed later of a Sabbath morning than any other time."

"Well, my dear, make haste and dress, and I will assist you, for breakfast will very soon be ready."

By the time her toilet was made the bell rung and they descended to the dining-room, where they found the family already assembled, and partook of a very good breakfast, after which it was arranged that Mrs. Bay and her daughter, Miss

Davilla and Harry should walk to church together.

When it was time to start, Mary took her mother by the arm, saying pleasantly to Harry:

"I will be mamma's escort, while you shall perform the same service for Miss Davilla."

"Most certainly, if agreeable to Miss Davilla," said Harry, bowing in the most polite manner to the young lady, though not a little vexed at the arrangement, for he would much preferred walking with his charming cousin.

The young lady graciously bowed her assent and they set out. But so deeply was Harry annoyed and chagrined by the turn affairs had taken, for he did not appreciate Miss Davilla at her true worth, and hence failed to enjoy her society as he ought, that it was impossible for him to conceal it. In fact, as Mary saucily told him after their return home, he "acted more like a great bear than a well-bred gentleman"—an accusation which he had the grace to acknowledge, but for which he offered no explanation or excuse. Mary, however, persisted in ascribing it to a cause totally at variance with the truth, believing that he had fallen in love with her teacher, and that his reserve arose from bashfulness, and she admonished him to correct the fault.

"I am sure," said she, "that Miss Davilla likes you, and if you will only treat her right who knows but she may be my cousin some day? I know I could not have a better."

"She will never be your cousin," he replied, gravely, "so let us drop the subject."

"Well, it will be your fault if she is not," replied Mary, "but if you wish to drop the subject, so be it," and it was not again alluded to during their visit. But still, she could not divest herself of the belief that Harry and Miss Davilla were in love with each other, and she secretly indulged a hope that at some future time events might turn out according to her prediction.

After dinner, Mr. Shepley called his pupils together, and Sabbath school exercises consumed over an hour. Mrs. Bay was very much interested in these exercises, for she was a pious, Christian woman, and anything tending to promote the influence of the Gospel of her Lord and Master was at all times a subject of deep interest to her. William Jones was a prominent participator in these exercises, and as she marked the fervent zeal with which he entered upon the instruction of his class, and heard him, in a short but well-delivered address to the entire school, enforce with peculiar energy the claims of Christ upon our hearts, she felt within herself that Mary's vindication of him was the truth, and that she had done him a grievous injustice. So perfectly was he skilled in deceit and hypocrisy! Really he cared no more for religion or the Sabbath-school than the veriest scoffer upon the face of the earth, but he had a part to play, and right skillfully he sustained it.

But it were a vain and useless task to attempt

to enumerate all the incidents of each day of their visit, extending over an entire week, and the effort would be alike unprofitable and uninteresting to both writer and reader. It is sufficient for us to say that Harry Bay omitted no opportunity during the time of their stay to bask in the sunlight of Mary's smile; he constantly sought her society, and each day but served to strengthen the cord which bound his heart to hers, and when the day of their departure arrived he was as completely enslaved as was ever Grecian or Roman captive of the days of yore. But no word had passed his lips intimating to her the nature ot his feelings toward her. He regarded her yet as a mere child, and for this reason he forebore to say anything to her upon a subject which he almost doubted her ability fully to comprehend. Perhaps it had been well for both of them had he at that time manifested less reason. The evil designs of William Jones were not then fully developed; he had scarcely begun to exercise upon her that subtle and poisonous influence which was subsequently destined to enshroud her fair young life in gloom; her heart and affections were then comparatively free, and might have been won by him, and encased in the armor of his virtuous love, she might safely have bid defiance to the wiles and snares which the treacherous and false-hearted tutor was preparing for her.

The time at last came for Mrs. Bay and Harry to return to their home, and with words of love and

kindly remembrance they parted from Mary. As they stood in the hall waiting for the carriage to be driven up to the door, Mary laid her hand upon his arm.

"You will visit me sometimes, will you not, cousin? I shall be so lonely when you and mamma are gone—more so, I fear, than if you had not come at all. You need not wait for papa and mamma, but come at any time. Will you not?"

Harry gave the required promise, and at that moment the carriage drove up to the door. They took their seats and were whirled away to the depot, and in a short time Harry and Mrs. Bay were rushing away in the direction of home with all the speed and power of steam, while Mary was riding "sad and lonely" back to the school building.

And what of William Jones during the week of this visit? More familiar with the ways of the world, and better educated in the school of passion than Mary, he had fathomed correctly the nature of Harry's feelings toward her, and he had apprehended serious interference from that quarter with the plans he had formed with the coolest and most calculating villainy for her ruin. But he watched them narrowly, and when he became satisfied that no word of love had passed between them he breathed more freely, but nevertheless determined to delay no longer the commencement of his schemes to destroy her peace and happiness.

The next day was the Sabbath, and as Mary remembered the events of the preceding one, and contrasted her happiness then with her sadness and lowness of spirits now, she determined she would not go to church. Accordingly she pleaded a headache (which she really had) and begged Mrs. Shepley to excuse her attendance, to which the good lady freely assented, and she remained at home. Sometime after the family had gone, she was in her own room, when there came a gentle tap at her door. She was surprised, for even the servants had gone out, and she supposed there was no one in the house but herself, but she arose and opened the door, and there stood William Jones.

"Why, Mr. Jones," said she, in tones which revealed her surprise at seeing him, "I supposed you were at church with the rest of the family."

"I beg your pardon for the intrusion, Miss Bay," he replied politely, "but I knew you did not go to church, and as I did not care about going, thought I would bring you this book, knowing you to be very fond of reading," handing her as he spoke a handsomely bound volume he had brought with him.

"Thank you, Mr. Jones. You are very kind. I did not feel like going out to-day—was rather low-spirited—and I have no doubt this will help me very much to pass away the time," she replied, taking the book and turning to the title page.

"'The Two Lovers,'" she continued, as she read its title, "is it a good story?"

"I think you will find it interesting as well as instructive," he replied. "Read it, and give me your opinion of it."

"I will with pleasure."

"I, too, am lonely to-day. Won't you come down in the library and pick out a book for me, little sister? for you know you promised to be my sister. I will read anything you may select."

Mary colored somewhat, and replied, "I will be down in a few moments."

"Thank you," said he, and went away.

He descended to the library and impatiently waited her coming. Mr. Shepley had a large and well selected library, embracing works of every class, scientific, historical, biographical, poetical. and a considerable collection of standard works of fiction. Jones was wondering what her choice would be—a love story, a volume of poems, or what—when there was a tap at the door and she entered the room.

"Thank you, sister mine, for your kindness in coming down," he said. "Will you have a seat?"

"No, I thank you. You asked me, I believe, to select a book for you. Will you accept and read my choice?"

"Certainly I will."

"Then read this," said she, handing down a copy of the Holy Scriptures. "I know of no book

in all this collection which can be studied with as much interest and profit as this."

He colored violently, for he thought she intended a reproof, but took the book with some muttered expression of thankfulness, which, however, found no echo in his heart.

"And now," said she, "having fulfilled my promise, I will return to my own room."

He made no effort to detain her, albeit he was deeply chagrined and disappointed. He had invited her into the library merely for the purpose of enjoying her society, nothing doubting that he should be able to invent some plan for keeping her there. But her simple piety and childish faith in the Word of God—her choice of that book of all others—had completely upset his calculations and scattered all his plans, and he was so much nonplussed that he knew not what to say or do. As soon as she was out of hearing, he threw down the book with a muttered curse.

"Fool that I was," said he, "was anything ever so awkwardly done? But I will succeed yet;" and with this unholy determination he left the library and sought his own room. Throwing himself upon a lounge he lay a long time musing upon his discomfiture, and devising new plans for the future, for so far from being induced by this one defeat to abandon his villainous purpose, he was but stimulated to renew with more determined energy his fiendish designs. What his plans finally became need not now be laid before the reader—

they will be sufficiently developed in the course of our story.

Time sped away and a vacation approached. Mary had not been home since coming to the school, and she had resolved that she would take advantage of the recess to visit that place, dearer to her than any other on earth, where dwelt all whom she could call friends. Duly advised of her determination, Harry had signified his intention of coming to accompany her on her journey, and she was now looking each day, with the most anxious impatience, for his arrival.

At last he came, and the heartiness and warmth with which he was greeted would doubtless have instilled some jealousy into the heart of William Jones had he been present at the first meeting of the adopted cousins. Certainly it was all that any cousin could have a right to require, and yet selfish, exacting Harry was far from being satisfied. He did not want a mere cousinly greeting; he would not be satisfied with anything short of a lover's welcome, and her greeting was as far from this as anything that could well be imagined. There was an entire absence of that shyness and embarrassment—that pleasant little excitement, so diverse from all other, which attends the greeting of lovers long separated—no blushing or fluttering—but with true sisterly freedom she met, embraced and kissed him, and then drawing his arm around her waist, led him away in the direction of her room.

"You naughty fellow," said she, with well simulated indignation, "how you have kept your promise."

"My promise? What do you mean?"

"Oh! yes. It is very well for you to pretend ignorance and forgetfulness. If you forget a promise made to your sweetheart as readily as the one made to your cousin, I pity her and you. But you shall not escape my just wrath by any such shallow pretense as this," said Mary, shaking her head menacingly at him.

"I have no wish to escape your wrath if I have done wrong," said he, with mock humility, "but will your ladyship condescend to inform me of the nature of my offense, that I may perform due penance?"

"Now, Harry Bay, you are really provoking. Did you not promise me when you were here with mamma that you would visit me again before school was out? and how have you kept that promise?" said she reproachfully.

"Are you sure I promised to visit you before school was out, or did I only promise to visit you without specifying any time? and here I am in fulfillment of that promise," responded he, laughing at her pretended indignation.

"Are you not ashamed to try and creep out of it by such a subterfuge as this?" she cried, merrily. "Oh! shame, where is thy blush?"

"But answer my question. Did I name any time at which I should visit you?" he persisted.

"You did not exactly name the day," she replied, more seriously, "but I asked you to visit me often, and you said you would."

"And so I did. Every day I visited you in spirit, and every week my white-winged messengers were here to assure you of my love and my constant remembrance, and to inquire after your welfare and happiness. Was not that enough?"

"I will admit, cousin mine, that you were very faithful in writing to me, and I suppose I must forgive your other derelictions on this account," said she, kindly, "but I really expected one or two visits from you before this time."

Long time they sat and talked, and when the tea bell rung they had hardly finished asking and answering questions. They went down, and Harry was kindly greeted by every member of the family save Mr. Jones, who, looking upon him as a competitor for the favor of Mary, was hardly more than polite to him—less than this he dare not be lest it should injure his suit with her. But had he dared give vent to his feelings, very different would have been his welcome, for the demon of darkness had taken possession of his soul, and he could ill brook the presence of any one or anything which threatened to cross his path.

The next morning Harry and Mary were in the parlor when Mr. Jones entered.

"The carriage is ready, Miss Bay," he said, "and if you have no objections I will accompany you to the depot."

"Certainly, Mr. Jones, we shall be pleased to have you. Miss Davilla is going with us, and I am sure she will be glad of your company home."

At this moment Miss Davilla entered the room and said she was ready.

"Then let us set out at once," said Mary, running out to the carriage. "Cousin, you and Mr. Jones take the front seat. Miss Davilla and I do not like to ride backward."

William Jones bit his lips in angry disappointment, for he had intended to so arrange matters as to secure a seat by the side of Mary during this ride; but there was no help for it, and he could only submit, secretly consoling himself for his disappointment by the reflection that if he was disappointed, so, too, was Harry, and by securing the seat directly opposite hers. As for Harry, he was too noble-minded to indulge in any such belittling reflections. Thoroughly disliking Jones, and rating him as the unprincipled villain and hypocrite he was, he still felt no disposition to treat him otherwise than kindly, feeling well assured that Mary had too much sense, and was too strongly imbued with the principles of morality and virtue to be in any danger from him.

They had a very pleasant ride, and when they had seen Harry and his beautiful cousin comfortably seated, and the cars slowly rolling away from the depot, Mr. Jones and Miss Davilla entered the carriage and returned home. They were both in-

clined to be quiet, and but little conversation took place between them. He was thinking of Mary, and envying Harry the ride he would have with her on the cars, and she was silent from choice.

Harry and Mary meantime were speeding onward toward home, and when they reached the depot in Kittaning they found Dr. Bay and his wife with the carriage waiting for them. The moment Mary alighted from the cars she was folded in her mother's arms.

"Dear, dear mamma," said she, sobbing with hysterical joy; "how glad I am to get home once more, and to see you looking so well; and you, too, dear papa, I really believe you have grown younger in the six months that I have been away."

Albeit, not much used to the melting mood, the good old doctor was seen to wipe his eyes in a very suspicious manner, as he witnessed the delight of his foster-daughter. And at that moment he felt repaid more than a thousand fold for all that he had ever done for her.

As soon as the warmth of their congratulations would admit, they all entered the carriage and were driven in the direction of the doctor's mansion, and when they came in sight of the well-remembered place, the childish delight of Mary broke out afresh.

"I declare," said she, "if there isn't good, dear old Kitty, standing at the gate to welcome us. God bless you, Kitty," said she, springing out of the carriage into the arms of her faithful old friend,

the moment the vehicle stopped, "you are really looking quite young again. You dear, dear creature," she continued, kissing her again and again in the exuberance of her joy, while Kitty seemed scarcely less excited than her young mistress. And then stately, dignified old Bruno, the Newfoundland who had been her playmate and constant companion before she left home, forgetting his wonted gravity and extreme sense of propriety, came bounding along to welcome her home and receive his share of her caresses—a boon which the little girl was not slow to bestow upon him. Indeed everything about the place came in for its just proportion of the overflowing of her heart's affection, and it must be chronicled that in no single instance were its treasures wasted on the empty air. For every animate object, even down to the canary in his gilded cage, who poured forth his loudest and sweetest notes to welcome her home, seemed to know and recognize her presence, and to vie earnestly with each other in the warmth and heartiness of their greeting.

"Well, Kitty," said Mary, as soon as the warmth of welcome would permit, "how are my favorite flowers? Have you taken good care of them?"

"Indeed I have, honey. Just come into the garden and see," and the faithful old creature led the way, while Mary followed, accompanied by Harry, who wanted to call her attention to some rare flowers of great beauty which he had procured and planted expressly for her.

When the garden had been sufficiently admired, Harry told the faithful old servant to go and prepare some supper for them, as they had had no dinner and it was now about four o'clock in the afternoon, for he desired to be alone with Mary. The evident admiration with which Jones regarded Mary, had excited his jealous fears, and he had determined to forego that portion of his plans which contemplated maintaining silence on the subject of his love for Mary until the close of her school-days, and to bring matters to a crisis at once. Leading her, therefore, to a beautiful summer house near the center of the garden, he seated himself by her side, and, after a few moments of embarrassed silence, said in a low but earnest tone:

"Have you ever loved any one, Mary?"

Mary blushed, averted her head, and for some seconds did not answer.

"Will you not answer me?" he asked.

"Why do you ask me that question, Harry?" she said at last. "I do not know what you mean. You know that I love papa, and mamma, and you—in short, I love all my friends. Is that what you mean?"

"No, Mary, it is not what I mean. You are now almost sixteen years of age, and you certainly know what I mean when I speak of love. Else why that crimson blush at the mention of that word? Mary, do you love William Jones?"

At the mention of this name, she blushed more

violently than ever, and attempted to rise from her seat.

"Cousin," she said, "let us go in the house."

"No," said Harry, seizing her hand and detaining her by his side, "you must not go until you give me an answer, Mary," he continued ardently. "I love you better than my own life—I worship you. Without your love I shall be supremely miserable. Say, Mary, can you return my earnest, sincere affection, or do you love another?"

At this the color receded from her face and left her pale as marble. She had never suspected that Harry regarded her with any other feeling than that which she had for him—the love of a cousin, or rather of brother and sister. True, they were no relation to each other, save by adoption, but they had been, as it were, reared together, and the thought of a possibility of any other or different love had never entered her mind. At length she spoke, but without looking in his face.

"Harry, as a cousin, as a brother, I love you—no more."

"Answer me one question farther. Do you love another?"

"No, Harry. I do not. You know I am too young to think of love."

"You are too young to wed, but you are not too young to love," he replied. "I can afford to wait for your love. I ask you to be my wife, but not now. I will wait till your days of schooling are past, or even longer, if you will only promise

to love me and be mine. Say, will you promise?" he asked, in an earnest, pleading tone, bending forward and gazing imploringly in her colorless face.

"No, Harry, I cannot promise you anything now. I am too younng and inexperienced to know my own heart. One thing I do know—you are worthy a much better wife than I could ever be; are worthy the undivided affection of any pure, true-hearted woman—but I love you only as a brother. I do not know that I love any one with any other or warmer affection than I have for you, but this is all I can give you. And now," said she, withdrawing her hand and rising to her feet, "let me go to my own room."

She wished to regain her composure before meeting her parents at the tea table, for they must not suspect anything. He made no further effort to detain her, for he felt that it were worse than useless, but as soon as she was out of sight he rose and hastened to his own room.

CHAPTER VI.

Upon leaving the summer house Mary hastened at once to her room where she threw herself on the bed and lay for some time in a paroxysm of tears. It was the first time she had been addressed in the language of affection, and for a time it almost seemed to her excited and untaught imagination as though an insult had been offered to her, and yet she fully realized that Harry's intentions and motives toward herself had been none but the most noble and honorable, and soon that pity which is said to be "akin to love," filled her heart as she remembered his assurances that without her he would be supremely miserable, and she half repented that she had repulsed his proffered affections, and yet, in her inmost heart she felt that she could not conscientiously speak words of encouragement to him, for notwithstanding her asseveration to the contrary, an examination of her heart, in the light of the fierce fire of Harry's love, had revealed to her the fact that the feeling with which she regarded William Jones was not, as she heretofore considered it, mere sympathy for him in his lonely lot. The events of the last few moments had transformed her from sunny girlhood into the dignity and maturity of womanhood, and she realized with maiden modesty and shame the fact that she had given her heart to one who had never asked its bestowal.

Some time she lay thus tormented with conflicting emotions, but, finally remembering that she should soon have to meet the family at the tea table, she rose and proceeded to remove from her countenance, so far as she was able, the traces of the violent emotions through which she had passed. In this she was but partially successful. The cold water removed all traces of recent tears, but no amount of washing would restore to her pallid cheeks their wonted bloom, and when the bell finally rang and she descended to the dining-room, her countenance presented almost the ghastly pallor of a corpse.

Not so with Harry. Though deeply mortified and disappointed at the result of the interview from which he had hoped so much, he still had sufficient manhood and fortitude to conceal it, and when after having performed his ablutions, he came to the tea table, no one would have suspected from his appearance and manners that he was a recently rejected lover; but calmly as he took his refusal he was by no means disposed to accept it as final, and while awaiting the tea bell, he had determined upon a plan of operation which he proceeded at once to carry into effect, not only for the purpose of advancing his interest with Mary, but also to destroy, as far as lay in his power, the influence which he had the best reason to believe William Jones had obtained over her; and in this, although he reasonably supposed he would be advancing his own cause, he was not entirely self-

ish. He had observed that gentleman very closely, and he had become satisfied that he was a reckless, unprincipled man, and very correctly reasoned that any influence he might exercise over Mary would be but evil to her; and he was resolved, whether he could win her or not, to save her from the misery which he believed would attend her life if united with so despicable a man as he believed Jones to be.

Accordingly he took an early opportunity to ask Kitty to meet him in the summer-house, where his unfortunate declaration of love had been made, as soon as she could do so, after dark, telling her, by way of inducement to comply with his request, that he had something to say to her of Mary. Good, honest, old Kitty, whose love for Harry was second only to her devotion to Mary, readily promised him the desired interview, and named the hour at which she would meet him in the arbor.

Dr. Bay was the first to notice, at the tea table, the pallor of Mary's countenance, and his paternal and professional fears were at once aroused, and in a voice of tender earnestness he inquired:

"My dear daughter, what ails you? Are you sick?"

"Oh! no, dear papa," replied Mary, "I am not sick, but I have a slight headache and feel somewhat faint."

"What can I do for you, my love?" he inquired.

"Nothing, I thank you," said she; "I shall be

better as soon as I have drank a cup of tea."

Mrs. Bay expressed her mother's fears that the ride had been too much for her little darling, but Mary so earnestly assured them that it was mere fatigue, which would disappear with refreshment and rest, that they finally desisted from saying anything on the subject, and allowed her to finish her tea in silence, after which she retired to her own room and again threw herself upon the couch, where she indulged in another fit of violent and passionate weeping. And yet, had any one asked her why she wept thus, it would have been very difficult for her to have answered the question satisfactorily to herself. It was not entirely pity for Harry's rejected suit; it was not mortification at the discovery that she loved one by whom she had no assurance that her love was returned; it was not sorrow for anything past, or apprehension for the future, nor, perhaps, was it a combination of any or all these.

There are times when people of sensitive, highly refined souls find themselves with feelings so much exercised and excited by some cause, the real nature of which they are unable to comprehend or explain, that nothing but a good, hearty cry will relieve or restore them to any degree of composure. To such persons at such times tears are the safety-valve, relieving the pressure upon the overcharged heart, which would otherwise burst with the violence of its emotion. This was just the situation of Mary at this time—her feelings were

fearfully excited, and her heart was full—her emotion must have vent, or it would overwhelm her. And therefore she wept—wept just because she felt like it, and because it did her good to weep. And her weeping calmed and soothed her, and when Mrs. Bay, half an hour later, sought her room, impelled thither by her maternal anxiety, she found Mary comparatively calm, and the appearances which had excited so much uneasiness at tea time almost entirely gone.

Turn we for a short time to Harry and old Aunt Kitty. As soon as she had finished her work, and the friendly shades of night had fallen sufficiently to vail her movements, Kitty stole out of the house and hastened unobserved to the summer-house, where she found Harry awaiting her with some impatience.

"Well," said she, as soon as she entered the arbor, "what do you want with me, Master Harry?"

"I want to talk to you about Mary."

"What do you want to say about her? I heard all that you and she talked about this afternoon. Was that what you wanted to talk to me about?"

"It was. But how came you to hear our conversation?" said Harry, with no little surprise manifested in his tone. "Kitty, have you been playing the eavesdropper?"

"No, Master Harry," she replied, "but Mrs. Bay sent me to call Mary into the house, because she wanted to see her about something. I came out,

but could not find her, and then I went to the summer-house, and just as I came up I heard you say, 'Have you ever loved any one, Mary?' and then I did not want to interrupt you, so I just waited until Mary started to the house, when I went in by the kitchen door. Pardon me, Master Harry, for having done so, but really I did not come out here to listen."

"Never mind about it, Kitty. Only you must not say anything about it to any one," he replied, though he was not a little mortified to find that the drama which had been intended to be only known to Mary and himself had really been enacted for the benefit of a large audience.

"You may depend that I never will."

"Thank you, Kitty; and now I will tell you what I want. You must go to Huntingdon when Miss Mary returns, and stay with her. If you heard our conversation this afternoon, you know something about William Jones. He is a teacher in the school, and I think a bad man, and I want you to guard Mary against his influence."

"But how can it be done?" said Kitty. "I am willing to do anything to serve you and her, but I do not know how."

"I will tell you. You must first get my aunt's consent to go, by pretending that you love Mary so much you cannot bear to be separated from her. Then we must get you a position as chambermaid, or something of the kind, there at the school, and then you can watch her. Will you do

it? I will pay you well for it if you will go."

"I will go," replied Kitty, "but not for pay. I will go because I love you and Mary, and don't want to see you both made miserable by the scheming of that villain Jones."

"Well, make your arrangements with Aunt Bay and I will write to Mrs. Shepley about your coming, and I have no doubt the whole matter can be arranged to our entire satisfaction. And as I said before, I will pay you well for your services. Your pay shall be more than you would earn here."

"I tell you, Master Harry," replied Kitty, with honest energy, "I will not go for pay, but only because I love you and Mary, and want to see you both happy. What do I care for the money? I've no soul in the world that I care anything for—nobody but just myself, and so I can live the few years that I have yet to stay on earth; that is all I need to care for. I shall be well enough paid if I can only do my little master and mistress some good. So don't say anything more about the pay unless you want to hurt old Kitty's feelings."

"Well, I won't say anything more about it," replied Harry, his heart touched by the honest devotion of the old servant, "only you go and take good care of your little mistress. And now you had better go in the house and say nothing to any one, and especially to Mary, about this conversation, or about the other one you overheard here."

"Never fear, Master Harry. You can trust Kit-

ty for that. I only want to live to see you and Mary married and happy. And now good night," said she, taking his hand and kissing it with earnest affection, and then gliding out of the arbor in the direction of the house.

"Good-night, Kitty. God bless you," he replied, with heartfelt earnestness, and then, as she vanished in the darkness, he added, soliloquisingly, "How much less of misery, sin and unhappiness would exist in the world, if all mankind had but one half the truth, fidelity, purity, and earnest, unselfish devotion to the good of others which dwells in thy spirit."

But alas for the human race! Instead of the faithfulness and affection of old Kitty being the moving principle which actuates the mass of mankind in their intercourse with their fellows, we too frequently see its very opposite pervading the human breast. Some philosopher, who has been pronounced cynical, has said that "all mankind are natural enemies," and cheerless as is the doctrine, unflattering to the species as its announcement seems, we are by no means sure that it is as destitute of foundation in truth as is generally claimed. Take, for example, the intercourse of men in commercial pursuits. Commerce has been defined to be the interchange of commodities for mutual benefit. But who believes that the merchant who sells his goods, the farmer who markets his grain, the lawyer who delivers his opinion of a case presented to him, the physician who writes

out his prescription—are any of them actuated by the desire of being beneficial to their customers? Are they not, on the contrary, all actuated solely by the desire to benefit themselves, and, to a certain extent, at the expense of those with whom they deal? Does not the merchant rejoice with heartfelt glee when a rise in the wholesale market enables him to raise the price of the goods with which his shelves are filled, and thus accumulate large gains on his purchases, which must be paid from the pockets of his customers? Will it not rejoice the very heart of the farmer, when he brings his load of wheat to the market, to see two rival buyers bidding against each other for his grain, until, their angry spirit being aroused, he disposes of his commodity for four or five cents per bushel more than it is really worth? Does not the lawyer chuckle within himself when retained by some wealthy and obstinate client in a cause in which large fees and long bills of cost loom up before his mind's eye? And so on throughout the whole category of classes and employments of the sons and daughters of Adam. We all alike rejoice when the demands or necessities of our neighbors enable us to dispose of our wares or our knowledge at enormous prices, not because the purchasers are thereby benefited, but because our purses are well lined. This is but a single illustration of the principle we are considering. Others may be seen daily in the envy, the petty jealousy of preferment, the backbiting, the scandal,

the unjust suspicions, the sneers and innuendoes which pervade the atmosphere of every community. It finds expression in the trite and true saying that "when a man once starts down hill every one gives him a kick," and is illustrated by the fact that when a poor wretch—more especially a female—has once made a false step, every hand, instead of being extended to reclaim the wanderer, is put forth to push him or her bodily down the precipice upon the brink of which he or she has stumbled.

Did we say every hand? Let us recall the expression. Let us not, because of the injustice of the generality of mankind, be unjust to those noble spirits who, like good old Kitty, are willing to sacrifice their own comforts and conveniences to the mere desire of being serviceable to their fellow creatures; or to those other noble missionaries of fallen humanity—alas! too rare—who will appear in the course of this story, and who falter not in their visitations of the vilest purlieus of sin and shame, well satisfied if their efforts but result in redeeming one poor wretch from the degradation in which they are wallowing. To such noble souls as these, even though we could speak with the tongue of angels or write with the pen of inspiration, any words of ours would fail to render the full meed of their merited commendation. That they can only receive at the last day when the Father himself shall say unto them, "Come, ye blessed." But to return to our narrative.

Events seemed for a time to favor Harry's plans for compassing the entire safety of her upon whom he had fixed his affections, and for guarding her against the supposed machinations of William Jones. Mrs. Bay readily gave her consent that Kitty should accompany Mary upon her return to school, and Mrs. Shepley expressed herself very much pleased at the opportunity thus presented of supplying the place of one of her chambermaids who had just married and left her. It was speedily arranged that Kitty should accompany "her little mistress," as she called her, to Huntingdon when she returned to school, and should be assigned to the care of the floor upon which Mary's room was situated. Till then she would not be very much needed, as the boarders were most of them at home during the vacation, and but very few of the rooms, consequently, were occupied.

Mary was quite delighted when she learned that she was to have the companionship of her faithful old Kitty upon her return to Huntingdon. Of course she did not understand that her principal errand there was to watch her—they would not thus intimate that they feared any evil befalling her, nor indeed did any one but Harry and Kitty —but Mrs. Bay told her daughter that Kitty was very anxious to be near her; that she (Mrs. Bay) could very well spare her, and as Mrs. Shepley wanted her, she had consented to let her go. Aside from her delight at having some one present to remind her constantly of home, Mary felt some

distrust of herself; she was oppressed by some presentiment of impending evil, of the nature of which or from whence it was to come, however, she had not the least idea; she had the utmost confidence in Kitty's sterling judgment and plain, practical common sense, and she knew that in any emergency she could rely with the most unwavering confidence upon her earnest and affectionate devotion, and she rejoiced at the proximity of such a friend.

CHAPTER VII.

Restless time, who stays not his rapid flight for young or old, joy or sorrow, merriment or lamentation, and whose dominion extends over all things of an earthly nature, animate or inanimate, rolled the weeks into eternity; and at last arrived the day when Mary was once more to leave her home and take up her abode with Mrs. Shepley. As the day came nearer and nearer, she became more and more depressed in spirit; but if she had been asked why, it would have been impossible for her to have answered the question. The dim foreshadowing of some dire evil, to which allusion has already been made, was ever present with her, poisoning every moment and overclouding her every joy, and at times she almost resolved that she would not return to school or go out from beneath the sheltering ægis of her father's roof and her mother's love. The more she chided herself for what she termed her childish weakness, and attributed it all to her natural sorrow at leaving a home which had been so pleasant to her and where had been spent the only hours of true happiness she had ever known. Well had it been for her had she heeded the silent admonition of her guardian angel, which whispered her to remain with those who were able and willing to shelter her from all danger.

But the day at last arrived, and the carriage was at the door; Kitty was the first to enter it, and was quickly followed by Mary, Mr. and Mrs. Bay, while Harry mounted the box beside the driver, for he was to accompany her on the journey, and, after spending a few days with her at Huntingdon, to go on to Philadelphia, transact some business for his uncle, and then return to his home. The great family carriage rolled away to the depot, adieux were spoken, and Mary, accompanied by Harry and Kitty, was on her way to Huntingdon, where they arrived after a very pleasant journey, and were warmly welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Shepley. Jones, too, professed to join in the welcome, but it was with his lips only, for he hated Harry with all the intensity of his vicious and unprincipled nature; and he had learned from Mrs. Shepley the position which Kitty was to occupy, and justly regarded her as an obstacle in the way of the fulfillment of his base designs. But for the present it was, of course, necessary for him to control the feeling which rankled in his breast, and hence he met them with a smiling brow, while within raged nought but the demoniac fires of passion and hate.

Kitty was at once installed in her position, and while she remained there, Jones sought in vain for some opportunity to advance his infamous ends. She was faithful to her instruction; Mary quietly and willingly, nay, gladly submitted to her surveillance, for she had the most unbounded confi-

dence in the purity of her intentions and the correctness of her judgment, and she steadily refused to afford him any private interview, however brief, in which he might press his suit. Not that he directly sought such interview—he very well understood that any attempt of that kind while Kitty remained there would be fraught with disaster—but the thousand and one little artifices to which he resorted to entrap her into such interview, only failed to accomplish anything. He could therefore do nothing but simply bide his time and trust fate to remove this apparently insurmountable obstacle.

And he had not long to wait. Kitty had been there but a few weeks when she was prostrated by a fearful fever—almost the first sickness of her life—which rendered her removal from the school a matter of the most absolute necessity. Mary wept bitterly at parting with her old and faithful friend and servant, but there was no remedy, and she had to go; and Jones had sufficient address to get her place filled by a creature of his, who was willing to engage in anything, however base or sinful, so she was but paid for her nefarious services. As soon as she was installed in her new position, Jones called her one day into his room, which was on the same floor with Mary's, and there held a long consultation, the nature of which will sufficiently appear in the progress of our story. Suffice it to say that when she left his room at its close she was pledged to do anything in her power

to aid him, and to fully obey his instructions in every particular.

Her first step was to endeavor to ingratiate herself into Mary's good will, and to assume as far as she was able the same position in her confidence which Kitty had sustained before her sickness and return home; and this was soon accomplished to a certain extent. The depression of spirits under which Mary was laboring, intensified as it was by the loss of her faithful Kitty, her ignorance of the ways of the world and the distinction between her position and that of the servant, rendered her an easy prey to the wily and deceitful woman, who, aided by a certain degree of intelligence, and an insinuating, pleasant address, sought to entrap her, and Kitty had been away but barely two weeks when Mary came to persuade herself that she was really benefited by the change; for while Mary, the new girl, seemed just as much devoted to her as Kitty was, she was nearer her own age, and hence more fully and readily comprehended her feelings, while she certainly possessed more general intelligence than did her old friend. Poor child! could she but have penetrated beneath that glittering exterior, and beheld that loathsome corruption festering within her heart, how would she have shrunk from her contaminating presence; but no gift of second sight was hers, and blindly she went forward to her doom.

Day by day the unprincipled chambermaid, who pursued her hideous work with an energy

and address worthy of a better cause, increased and strengthened her influence over the lonely orphan. She possessed one of those strong, magnetic natures which seem able to influence and control every one with whom they come in contact; and Mary, with her lonely, dependent spirit —a spirit which, like the vine that twines itself about the rugged oak, beautifying and adorning its rough exterior, and hiding its unsightly covering with a vesture of living green, ever required the support of some sterner material than that of which her character was composed—soon came to lean upon her for advice in every matter of importance occurring in the simple history of her life. This was precisely what she was working for, and when this point was reached, when Mary had come to regard her as absolutely essential to her happiness, she lost no time in acquainting Jones with the fact, and with a fiendish glee, such as the arch-fiend of darkness himself may be supposed to feel at the contemplation of an immortal soul forever lost, she told him how completely Mary was within the fatal circle of her influence and her power. In like spirit with her own, he complimented her warmly upon her influence, dexterity and success, and paying her part of the stipulated price of the orphan's ruin, he gave her further directions for her conduct in the diabolical plot.

His next step was to obtain a personal interview with Mary, but this was no easy matter. Her

natural modesty and retiring disposition led her to avoid, not only him, but intimate association with all young men; and though he met her, of course, in the school room, it was long before he could obtain an opportunity to address her in the manner he desired. One evening when he was in his room, musing upon and cursing the ill-luck which had ever attended his efforts in that direction, he was aroused by Mary's well-known rap at his door. Hastily entering, she said:

"Now is your time. She is alone in the arbor in the garden."

"Yes," growled he, sullenly, "and when I get there she will be gone. I have tried that often enough, and —— me if I haven't half a mind to give up the chase altogether. There are plenty of others just as good as she who can be won with half the trouble."

"Oh! fie, William Jones," said the base and unprincipled woman, "will you give her up after all the trouble and expense you have been at, just when she is within your reach? I am ashamed of you. The fruit is within your reach. All you have to do is to reach out your hand and pluck it, and now you talk of abandoning the chase."

"But what makes you think I will find her there at this time any more than the dozen other times I have tried the same thing?" he asked, and then added, "I do not think you have done your work very well in this case."

"She and I went into the arbor and sat down,

and then she asked me to come and fetch a volume of poems and read to her, saying she would stay until I came back," replied the woman, without seeming to notice his last remark, "and I know if you go right out you will find her there."

It may seem almost incredible that any woman should be sunk so low as thus deliberately to plot against the peace and happiness of one of her own sex, but the fearful records of the crime and shame of our large cities prove conclusively that when a woman has once embarked on a career of degradation, nothing affords her more delight than to see others brought to the same debased level with herself, and serves to illustrate the fact that there is no being so degraded and maliciously wicked as fallen woman. Even as woman, when in her pristine state of purity, excels man in all of character that is lovable and lovely, discriminating with nicest touch between the pure and the impure, and turning with shuddering horror and loathing from the latter, so, when she has once been corrupted, she equally excels him in all that is hateful and devilish, and Satan has no more active or efficient agent in compassing the destruction of the human race than she then becomes.

Jones waited to hear no more. Seizing his hat he rushed out, only telling his emissary that if she deceived him she should bitterly rue it—a threat to which she listened with a contemptuous toss of the head—and hastily sought the garden. Approaching silently the little arbor, to his intense

delight, he saw Mary sitting within, all unconscious of his approach. Walking forward he entered the arbor, and then gave a little start as of surprise at finding her there, while upon her part the surprise at his appearance was genuine. She rose and would have fled, but he so courteously begged pardon for his intrusion, assuring her that he had no thought of finding her there, and begged her to remain, that she resumed her seat, nothing doubting that her faithless chambermaid would soon return.

He seated himself by her side and resumed the conversation by remarking:

"I have observed for some time, Miss Bay, that you seem depressed in spirits. May I inquire the cause, and if possible endeavor to remove it?"

"It is not worth while, Mr. Jones," she replied, "and indeed I hardly know myself the cause of my being so down-hearted. I presume it is, to a considerable extent, loneliness at my separation from home and friends."

"I think, if I may venture an opinion, that you isolate yourself too much. The other young ladies of the school indulge in rides, walks, boating parties, and the like, while you are hardly ever seen outside the grounds, or without a book in your hand. If you would mingle more in society, and study or read less, I think your despondency would all disappear," he said, kindly, and with such apparent interest in her as to touch her feelings at once.

"You are very kind," she replied, "but I really have not the least desire to mingle in society as you propose. Besides, my parents sent me here to study, and surely my teacher," said she, with an attempt at playfulness, "is not the one to advise a neglect of that duty."

"By no means, Miss Bay," he replied. "I would not advise you to neglect a duty, but there may be such a thing as going too far even in a right direction. Now it is eminently proper to read and study, but one may do too much even of that. By the way," he continued, changing the subject, "have you read the book I gave you?"

"I have only sketched it," she replied, with some hesitation in her manner, for she did not really like the character of the book, "but I very seldom read novels. But I sent it to your room before I went home at vacation. Did you not receive it?"

"Yes; but I wished to inquire how you liked it?"

"I liked it just tolerably well," she replied, with still more embarrassment. "But let us return to the house," said she, rising to her feet.

"No, Mary," said he, taking her hand and detaining her, "do not go, but sit down a moment longer. I have something to say to you."

At his request she resumed her seat, and he continued: "Mary, I love you better than my own life, and have loved you from the time I first saw you. And, pardon my presumption," he said,

passing his arm around her waist, "but I have sometimes dared to hope that I was not entirely indifferent to you. Say, Mary, do you, can you love me? Will you be my wife? Only say that you will, and I promise that nothing in my power shall be left undone to render you perfectly happy all through life. Only speak to me and say it shall be as I wish. Will you not, my love?"

But Mary could not answer. She had long loved him in the inmost recesses of her heart, and now she was too much overwhelmed with joyous emotion to make any response to his earnest pleadings. But she did not withdraw her hand or seek to rise from her seat—she only nestled closer to his side, while her fair head drooped upon his shoulder and her dark ringlets fell over and concealed the blush with which maiden modesty overspread her face.

"Mary, am I answered?" he continued, clasping her still more closely to his side. "I want you to speak to me, dearest. Just one little word to say that you will make me happy. It is said that silence gives consent, but I want you to say that you love me. Is it so, dearest?"

"Yes," she whispered, without raising her head from its resting place on his shoulder, her whole frame quivering with eager delight, while her blushes and her emotion grew so intense as to be absolutely painful.

"And you will be mine?" he eagerly asked.

"Forever."

At the low whispered reply he clasped her in both his arms and strained her with passionate violence to his bosom, while he showered kisses in profusion upon her lips—embraces and caresses which she was far from rejecting or refusing. Poor child! she could not read what was passing in that black heart of his, and she vainly fancied his love was as pure and unselfish as her own.

"God bless you for that promise," he said. "See, the moon is rising. She shall be witness to our pledges, and so long as she rolls her nightly rounds, and in due season sheds her light upon the earth, so long shall our love endure. And as, though at times obscured by clouds and darkness, she ever returns with her gentle beams to gladden and beautify the earth, so shall we, though at times perchance separated for a season by some cruel fate, ever return to each other with joy and gladness in our souls."

Mary could not reply. Her heart was too full, but in a silent ecstasy of joy she lay motionless in his arms, truly fearing that the whole scene was a delusive dream from which she should all too soon awaken. While she lay thus entranced on his bosom they were startled by a footstep upon the gravel walk, and the next instant Mary entered the arbor into which the moon was now brightly shining. Although she had followed Jones to the garden and had witnessed the whole scene, she started with well counterfeited surprise and astonishment at what she saw before her.

Mary recovered her self-possession in an instant and releasing herself from the ardent embrace of Jones, she sat by his side and said:

"Mary, you are astonished, but you need not be. She is a good and true friend of mine," she continued, turning to Jones and speaking of Mary, and we need not fear to tell her all. "Mr. Jones," she continued, again addressing the treacherous servant girl, "has just asked me to be his wife, and I have agreed to do so."

"I am so glad dear Mary for your sake, for I know you will be happy with him," replied she with feigned joy, kissing her heartily as she spoke, "but what will your parents say to this? For I judge they have intended you and Harry for each other."

In explanation of this last remark the reader must understand that Mary had made a confident of the chambermaid and had imparted to her not only the relationship she sustained to Dr. and Mrs. Bay, but also the scene which had transpired between herself and Harry in the arbor at home, the result of which had been so dissimilar to the one just enacted there.

"I do not think they will refuse their consent to our union when they know that my happiness depends upon it," she replied with tender confidence. "They love me dearly, and I am sure will not refuse me. I shall write to them about it this very night."

"I do not think you had better do so," said

Jones, who saw in this the defeat of all his devilish aims. "You know they do not like me, especially your mother, and I fear if you write them about our engagement, they will come at once and take you home. Rather let us first marry and then they will not withhold their blessing and forgiveness."

"No, William," replied Mary, earnestly, "I cannot do that. Much as I love you I cannot consent to marry you without their knowledge and their blessing. Never fear their refusal. They have never refused me anything, and I am sure they will not now in a matter of so much importance as this."

"Mary is right," said Mary, giving Jones, unobserved by her, a most expressive glance, "happiness could never attend a union unblessed by parental sanction. Let us go to the house, and do you, Mary, write them this very night and I will carry the letter to the post-office, and in three or four days at the farthest you will have their hearty blessing."

"Being in the minority, I suppose I shall have to submit," said Jones, in a pleasant tone, and rising, they proceeded to the house, where, with an affectionate kiss he bid Mary good night, and went to his own room, while the girls, turning in an opposite direction, were soon locked within the precincts of Mary's chamber.

Mary threw herself into the arms of her friend, sobbing with joy, and exclaimed:

"Oh! Mary, I am so happy, and yet it seems almost like a dream, and I am afraid I shall awake all too soon. Tell me, is it really true, or am I asleep and dreaming?"

"No, indeed, my dear Mary," replied the wily and deceitful girl, "you are wide awake, and are the happy betrothed of one of the noblest men in the world. I could almost find it in my heart to envy you your future happiness, but that I love you too well."

"Be assured, my dear friend," replied Mary, tenderly, "that in my happiness I shall never forget her who has been such a friend to me in my loneliness. You shall live with us until you marry some one worthy your noble and generous nature, and then we will live near you and witness your happiness."

"You are too kind," replied she; "but now go and write your letter, and I will take it to the office, for it is getting late."

Mary seated herself at the table, but her brain was in such a whirl of excitement that she could hardly write. Several letters were consumed and destroyed before she got one to suit her, but at last she succeeded in finishing one which she thought would do, and handing it to Mary, the servant, kissed her and bade her an affectionate good night, and then, as soon as the girl had left the room she undressed and sought her couch.

But it was long ere she could sleep. Her whole brain was in a fever of excitement, and for hours

she lay and tossed from side to side, musing upon the events of the evening. A few hours before she was but a lonely and desponding schoolgirl, far away from home and friends; now she was suddenly developed into a woman, and the betrothed of her heart's choice, who was, she doubted not, quietly sleeping under the same roof with her. Alas! how was she mistaken. At that moment her betrothed, instead of being locked in the arms of sweet, refreshing slumber, was engaged in perfecting a scheme to destroy all her future happiness.

At length she slept, and dreamed that she was walking along a path which led through a beautiful mead spangled with every variety and hue of the most beautiful flowers. The sun shone brightly, while a pleasant zephyr, laden with the perfumes of the immense flower bed around her, fanned her brow and imparted a delicious coolness to the atmosphere. The air was vocal with the warbling of birds singing their sweetest notes, and everything lent its aid to gladden and beautify the scene. Discovering a cluster of flowers of rarer beauty and fragrance than any other around her, she reached her hand to pluck it, when suddenly a hissing serpent started from their midst and struck his fangs deep into her arm, and with a loud cry of terror she awoke. Was it a premonition of impending fate?

CHAPTER VIII.

As soon as the faithless Mary had received the letter from the hand of Mary, she started out, as Mary supposed, to deposit it in the postoffice, but instead of doing so, she sought at once the room of William Jones, whom she found impatiently awaiting her.

"Well," said he, in a querulous tone, as soon as she came in, "what did you want to oppose me for? I intended to marry her without her parents' knowledge, for as soon as they learn anything about it, the fat will be all in the fire."

"You intended to marry her, did you?" said the woman, sneeringly. "The more fool you, that's all I've got to say. A pretty wife she'll make, with her baby, spoilt-child sort of ways."

"Oh! come, Mary," said he, yawning, "don't let us have a scene. You know very well what I mean, and there is no use getting your back up about the matter."

"Now you talk sensibly," said the girl, somewhat mollified. "But I thought from the tone in which you spoke that you had allowed this girl, with her pretty face, to make a fool of you, and it naturally made me a little angry."

"Ha! ha! Is that all? You are not a bit jealous now, I suppose," said he, chucking her familiarly under the chin.

"Jealous! no. Why should I be jealous? Don't be a fool if you can help it," said the woman, spitefully. "This is a simple matter of business between us, and it matters not a whit to me whether you succeed or not, so I only earn and receive the compensation you promised me. And now have done with your nonsense and let us proceed to business."

"With all my heart. What is it?"

"Here," said she, producing it as she spoke, "is the letter she has written home, and which she, poor fool, thinks is already on the way to Kittaning."

"Well, what is to be done with that?"

"What is to be done with that? You seem very stupid. I really believe your partial success has turned your brain. Of course there is but one thing to be done. You are to take it, and at the proper time write an answer to it in her father's name, consenting to the marriage, and urging that it be solemnized at once. Then your way is clear enough, is it not?" said the woman.

"But that would be forgery."

"What of it? I don't imagine that would hurt you much, or add anything to the weight of guilt already on your soul."

"But of course she would know that it was not her father's handwriting, and that would spoil all."

"You are master enough of the pen to avoid all that."

"But I have never seen any of his handwriting, and know not how to imitate it."

"I have arranged for all that. While she was writing this letter, I stole two or three of her father's letters from her dressing-case, upon which they were lying. Here they are," said she, producing them. "And now you must go to work and get up an answer to this, send it to some one in Kittaning, and have it mailed there, and of course she will think it is genuine. You must be very careful what sort of a letter you write."

"You must help me compose it," said he, with evident admiration of her genius in the concoction of villainy. "I confess you are smarter than I am."

"Well, let us first read what she has written."

And tearing open the missive, the conspirators proceeded without further delay or parley to analyze its contents. Mary had written a very kind and affectionate letter, speaking in the highest tones of her betrothed, informing her parents of what had taken place, and asking their consent to the union and their blessing on the same. After reading and sufficiently commenting upon it, they set to work to prepare a suitable reply, and after much erasure and changing, produced the following:

KITTANING, May —, 18—.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER: Your note of —— is received. It has produced no little surprise, and some degree of regret, both to your mother and

myself, for we had indulged a hope that you and Harry might one day be united in the same holy ties which you now propose to form with another. And knowing as we do that his heart was set on this but increases our disappointment.

Nevertheless, my dear daughter, we do not desire to throw any impediments in your way to happiness, and believing your affianced to be a worthy young man, we freely give our consent to the union, and with it our heartiest blessing. We have only to recommend that the marriage take place before your return home, as otherwise we fear an unpleasant scene with Harry, who I am satisfied really loves you. Immediately upon your marriage (which, on Mr. and Mrs. Shepley's account, we think should be very private) we shall expect you and your husband to visit us and receive our warmest welcome. Let us know when you will come, and we will meet you at the depot.

Accept, my dear daughter, for yourself and your intended, the best wishes of your mother, and especially of

Your affectionate father,

SAMUEL C. BAY.

P. S. I enclose a note to Mrs. Shepley telling her we are about giving a party and want you to come home. This will account for your leaving school so suddenly. Hand that to her. This letter you had, perhaps, better destroy, as we think it desirable for certain reasons that your marriage should be kept private for a time. S. C. B.

When this villainous composition had been completed, Mary betook herself to her own room, while Jones, first carefully locking the door to avoid the possibility of intrusion from any source, set himself to copy it, imitating as closely as possible the handwriting of Dr. Bay. As his confederate had said, he was a perfect master of the pen, and in due time he had produced a copy which so closely resembled Dr. Bay's chirography that very close scrutiny, indeed, would be required to show that it was a counterfeit. This letter he dispatched to a "chum" or "pal" of his at Kittaning, with instructions to mail it within a day or so after its receipt. This instruction, it may be remarked, was not complied with until his "pal" had opened and read the letter, thus getting an idea of the scheme of villainy on foot, carefully treasuring up the information thus obtained for future usefulness and profit, after which it was duly mailed to accomplish its villainous object.

But a few days had elapsed after the betrothal of Jones and Mary, until Mary brought her a letter just taken from the post-office. She glanced at the post-mark, saw that it was from home, and for a moment was so much agitated with her contending emotions that she hesitated to open it. Hope, anticipation, doubt and fear were each struggling for the mastery, but presently she broke the seal and began to read. Mary watched her closely to see if she had any suspicion of the vile plot of which the letter was the culmination, but she had

read but a few lines when all doubt vanished, for a light as of the most radiant happiness overspread her countenance, and with a cry of joy she exclaimed:

"Oh! Mary, I am so happy. Father and mother give their free consent and their blessing. We will go home in a few days, and, dear Mary, you must go with us."

"I was sure they would not refuse you," replied the treacherous girl, folding her in her arms, "anything so important to your happiness. How kind they are."

"They are the dearest father and mother a girl was ever blessed with," replied Mary, with a full heart. "But where is William? Run, Mary dear, and tell him to meet me in the arbor. Dear spot, I shall always remember it, and date my true happiness from the time I met William Jones there. Oh! Mary, my happiness is now perfect," and she burst into tears.

Jones was in the arbor almost as soon as she was, and the character of the interview between them may be imagined by the reader. It was such as might be supposed to take place between two pure and loving souls from whose pathway every obstacle to the consummation of their heart's desire and their perfect happiness had been removed. And upon Mary's part all was sincerity and truth. She believed Jones to be as good and pure as she was herself, and that she was just entering upon a life of pure enjoyment with a con-

genial soul, while he, deceitful villain that he was, read the letter which she put into his hand as though he had never seen it before, and then with lying lips mingled his expressions of congratulation and thankfulness with hers.

After some discussion it was finally settled between them that they should leave Huntingdon the next morning, go to Blairsville, where William asserted that he had a sister living, be married there and then proceed to the home of Mary's parents, reaching there on Saturday. Suddenly Mary remembered, what she had for a time forgotten, that there was a letter for Mrs. Shepley enclosed in the one she had received, and telling her lover of it, she hastened away to deliver it before that lady should retire for the night. She found Mrs. Shepley in her room preparing for bed, and the following conversation ensued:

"Why, Mary, child what ails you? I supposed you were in your room long ago, but here you are, and you seem very much excited. What can it mean?"

"Oh! Mrs. Shepley," said she, eagerly, "I am to go home to-morrow. I have a letter from father to that effect, and here is a note for you, which was enclosed in mine. Probably this will explain all."

Mrs. Shepley took the note, read it over, and then said:

"This seems very strange. Here," said she, producing a letter from her pocket, "is a letter

from your mother saying she will be here on Saturday, and here is another dated but one day later, directing us to send you home. What can it mean?"

"Most likely," said Mary, "she was coming for me but finally concluded she could not, and therefore sent this note to you. But I must go, for I think there is going to be a wedding, and I would not miss it for anything."

"Why do you think there is going to be a wedding?"

"Oh!" said Mary, not entirely truthfully, "it has been talked of for some time."

"But who is to be married?" persisted Mrs. Shepley.

At this Mary blushed and hesitated, but finally replied: "Cousin Harry, I think."

"Well," said Mrs. Shepley, "I do not understand it at all, but at any rate, we shall of course make no effort to detain you when your parents summon you home. So now, my child, retire to your own room, and in the morning the carriage will be ready to take you to the depot. Good-night."

"Good night, my second mother," said the girl, kissing her with genuine affection as she left the room.

On her way to her room she fell in with Jones and told him all about her interview with Mrs. Shepley. "And now," said she, with great glee, "I'll write and tell papa and mamma that they

may expect us on Saturday next."

But to this he of course objected. It was no part of his plan to allow her to communicate with her parents until his schemes were accomplished, and he at once entered an earnest and lover-like protest against her writing until she was Mrs. Jones, telling her that there would be plenty of time to communicate with them after that happy event should have taken place. Finally, perceiving that he was really in earnest in what she regarded as a mere whim, she yielded, and gave him her promise to write no more letters until she could sign them Mary Jones instead of Mary Bay, and with a kiss of tenderest affection they parted for the night.

It may seem strange to the reader that the peculiar circumstances attending the approaching marriage of Mary did not cause her to suspect that something was wrong and hold her back from the sacrifice she was about to commit. The sudden change in the intentions of her mother, as evidenced by the letter Mrs. Shepley had received, and the note inclosed in Mary's letter—the request of her parents, so strange and unnatural, that the marriage should take place away from home and should be kept from Mrs. Shepley—the absurd and insufficient reason given for the request—the fact that Jones was unwilling to be married at Huntingdon where Mary was acquainted somewhat, and where the ceremony would be witnessed by those whom she knew—his unwillingness to have her

write home—all these were certainly suspicious circumstances, and in the light of the events already detailed, and the knowledge we have of the intentions of William Jones, leave her almost without excuse. But it must be borne in mind, dear reader, that she was not possessed of this knowledge; that from the state of excitement under which she was laboring, she was not capable of judging and weighing circumstances as calmly and dispassionately as we can at this distance of time; that she had the most implicit trust in her betrothed, and that as yet she had seen no reason for suspecting him of any but the purest motives and intentions. And when all these facts are taken into the account, let us ask who in her situation, ignorant as she was of the devices and wickedness of the world, would have scrutinized more closely than she did? Oh! no, it was simply a struggle between an innocent, unsuspecting girl on one side, and two unprincipled schemers, familiar with every device of Satan, on the other, and the contest was too unequal to hope for her success.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE are times in the life of every one when they shrink with indefinable but almost all controlling dread from the consummation of some enterprise in which, nevertheless, their whole soul is enlisted—something which is the full fruition of their hopes and desires for a long period of time, but from which, on the eve of completion, they stand back with a lingering dread arising from the mysterious awe with which feeble and finite humanity is wont to contemplate the dim and unrevealed future—a consciousness of the inability of our limited and imperfect vision to penetrate the vail in which our destiny is wisely enfolded, or to foresee and avoid the shafts which fate may have stored up for us in her remorseless quiver.

So it was with Mary on the night with which the last chapter closes. The morrow would doubtless witness the consummation of the full measure of her heart's desire; would see her the bride of William Jones with the full sanction (as she supposed) of her parents, and she could not doubt that her happiness would be complete, and yet, the importance and solemnity of the step she was about to take weighed heavily upon her spirits and effectually banished sleep from her eyelids. What if she should after all have been deceived? What if Jones should not prove the faithful and

loving husband he had promised to be? What if, instead of augmenting her happiness by this union, she should only be consigning herself to a life of misery and wretchedness?

These and a thousand similar doubts occupied her mind until the first faint streaks of dawn began to tinge the eastern skies, when she arose and dressed herself for the contemplated journey. Mary was at hand to aid her, and, by artfully painting the happiness in store for her, to confirm and strengthen her sinking spirits, and by the time William tapped at her door and informed her that the carriage was in readiness, she was fully equipped for the ride, and they at once set out.

Jones had obtained permission from Mr. Shepley to accompany Mary to the depot, and as the carriage driver might have been somewhat in the way of the successful carrying out of his plans, he had decided to get rid of him, and accordingly had told him to go and do his morning's work and he (Jones) would drive to the depot and back himself. Mrs. Shepley kissed Mary tenderly, charged her with kindly messages for her mother, wished her a pleasant journey, and they set out; but instead of driving to the depot, Jones turned to the left into a street which led out of town on the road to the next station, about five miles away. When Mary asked the reason for this course, he laughed good-naturedly and replied:

"Why, my dear, the morning is pleasant, and as carriage riding is so much more delightful than

traveling on the cars, I thought we would stick to it as long as possible. Besides, I do not care about taking the cars where every one will know us. Have you any objections?"

"Oh! no," replied Mary, "I agree with you entirely, but that plan did not occur to me before; and certainly riding in the carriage where we can interchange ideas and thoughts is far preferable to the clatter and confusion of the cars. How I wish we were going all the way in our own conveyance."

"That, of course," replied Jones, "is out of the question, we should be too long in getting to our destination."

"You are quite right," said Mary, "but it would be so much more pleasant." And then after a pause she added, "What a lovely morning this is."

"Beautiful, indeed. A most auspicious omen, is it not, that we should begin our journey under such favorable circumstances? Let us regard it as indicative of the happiness which shall ever attend us along the journey of life on which we are about entering."

"Oh! that the omen may indeed prove prophetic," said Mary, in terms of earnest solemnity.

"Why does my darling speak with so much feeling?" asked Jones in tones of apparent concern. "One would almost think that you regretted this step, or that you were afraid to intrust me with your happiness. But it is not so, surely?"

"No, William," replied she, while the love-light

gleamed from her eye and overspread her whole countenance, "I do not fear to trust you with my happiness, my life, my all. Had it been so, I should never have started on this ride with you. Still it is a solemn thought to give one's self to another for life, and you must not blame me if I feel a little depressed in view of it. But, believe me, dear William, I would not recall a single word that I have spoken, or a single step that I have taken in connection with you. Oh! no, I do not distrust or doubt you in the least."

Where was William Jones' conscience that no remorse for his intended treachery toward her was awakened in his bosom, as Mary thus poured out her heart's purest treasures before him? Alas! a long course of familiarity with every form of sin and vice had seared and calloused that monitor until its voice was no longer raised in warning him from the path of wrong, and the only feeling produced in his breast by her words of simple trust and confidence was one of exultation at the evidence they afforded of how completely she was in his power.

In due time they arrived at the station, and Jones had barely time to engage some one to take the carriage back to Huntingdon when the train came thundering along with its living freight of joy and sorrow, of sadness and sunshine, of wealth and poverty. They took their seats and in a few seconds were whirling away in the direction of Blairsville, where they arrived about four o'clock

in the afternoon. Calling a carriage they entered it, and William gave some direction to the driver in a low tone, at which that worthy bowed, mounted the box and drove off. After riding what seemed to Mary a long way, they drew up before a large house in the eastern part of the town, and the driver, opening the door, said, "This is the place."

"Wait a moment, Mary," said Jones, as he sprang from the carriage, "until I see if my sister is at home," and he ran up the steps and entered the house without stopping to ring the bell. In about ten minutes he returned, and said, "My sister has just gone down in town, but will soon return, and meantime I have a sister-in-law here who will make you welcome. He assisted her to alight, and dismissing the carriage they entered the house together, where they were met by a very good looking but rather gaudily dressed woman of about forty, whom Jones introduced as his sister-in-law. She kissed Mary with considerable apparent warmth, and then led the way to the parlor.

After conversing a few moments she excused herself and left the room, and Mary had a chance to look about her. The room in which they were was furnished with a profusion of richest furniture, but there was a want of taste and harmony which struck her somewhat painfully, while some of the pictures and ornaments, of which there were a great many, displayed a freedom and boldness

which was quite shocking to Mary's well cultivated sense of propriety. Jones, too, appeared ill at ease, and altogether she was far from feeling happy, and she was much relieved when the woman came back and said "the lady" could go to her room now if she wished.

"Come, my dear," said Jones, rising and offering his arm, "I will see you to your room, and then I think you had better go to bed soon, for I am sure you must be weary with our long journey."

And he conducted her up stairs, the woman leading the way, and into a room furnished with the same profusion and want of taste which had so struck Mary in the parlor, and yet it would have been difficult for her to say just exactly what it was that she objected to. Everything was of the richest and most expensive character, but there was a kind of garish air and appearance about the whole house, so far as she had seen it, which filled Mary with some vague apprehensions that something was wrong, though she hardly knew what.

"This will be your room while we stay here," said Jones, "and mine will be the next room. And now," said he, turning to the woman, who still remained in the room, "Will you have supper brought up here for us? Mary is too tired to go down, and we will take supper here, and she can be presented to the rest of the family in the morning."

The woman bowed and left the room without a word, and in a short time returned with a tray upon which was spread a very nice supper. But Mary could not eat. Everything was so strange, so constrained and formal; there was so little cordiality between William and his pretended relatives, that she could not prevent some suspicions that all was not right from being engendered in her mind. Jones saw the cloud gathering in her mind and upon her brow, and he strove most assiduously to remove it and restore her confidence until such time as it suited him to reveal the full truth, and for this purpose he redoubled his endearments and attentions, urged her to partake of the supper, or at least to drink a cup of tea, but when she refused either, alleging a headache as the cause, he finally ordered it taken away, and the woman in grave silence as heretofore obeyed his directions.

And now, as soon as they were alone, he revealed his true character. Approaching the door, he locked it, and placed the key in his pocket, and turned to Mary, who was so terrified that she could hardly ejaculate.

"William, what does that mean? Why did you lock the door?"

"To keep out intruders, my pretty bird," he replied, with a leer so full of evil intent that she could not misinterpret it, and at once burst into tears.

"Oh! William, William," she cried in anguish,

"what do you mean? You have not deceived me? You could not be so base. Oh! tell me who and what these people are."

"Calm yourself, my dear Mary," he replied. "Surely you are not afraid of any evil befalling you while in company with your Willie. You do not think I would allow any one to come near you to do you any wrong, do you?"

"I hardly know what I think. Oh! William, take me away from here. I am afraid to stay here. I cannot but think there is something wrong about this house, and will not stay here save as your wife. Go, William, and call a minister, and let us be married, and then I shall be content, and not till then."

"Well, Mary," said he, in a tone so altered as to arrest her attention at once, for in it was the cold sternness of one who has been acting a part and has at length reached a point where dissimulation is vain, "it is useless to deceive you any longer. You may as well be calm and submit to what is not in your power to prevent. The letters which induced you to come here were never written by your father and mother. They were forged in answer to yours, which was never sent. Here it is," and he drew it from his pocket and handed it to her. "This woman is no relative of mine, but—"

She heard no more. The revulsion of feeling consequent upon these startling revelations had overwhelmed her, and with a low cry of, "God

help me," she fell fainting to the floor. Happy had it been for her had she never awakened from that deathly swoon.

CHAPTER X.

THREE weeks have passed since the close of the last chapter—three weeks fraught with untold misery to thousands of fallen humanity—three weeks of unmitigated sorrow and wretchedness to Mary, who still remains a close prisoner in the house where he left her. She is not allowed to go out at all, and is so closely watched that it is impossible for her even to write to her parents, and they have lost every trace of her. Ah! what would she not give for the means of communicating with Harry Bay in this fearful time of trial. How gladly would she, lost, ruined as she is, have hailed a visit from him, well assured that he would release her from the terrible bondage which was eating into her very soul; but vain hope.

No communication is suffered to pass from her to any human being—no one sees her save the woman who daily brings her meals, and acts as her jailer, and who is the one introduced by the villain Jones as his sister-in-law. Even the miserable comfort of his presence is denied her, for he has been gone for several days; and to every inquiry addressed to her cruel jailer as to his return or intentions; to every frenzied appeal for mercy or aid; to every prayer for liberty, she receives but the answer of studied silence. His

orders to the heartless woman who is mistress of this den of iniquity had been very strict and imperative upon this point, and with a most demoniac faithfulness she adhered to them.

Days rolled away into eternity, and when at length six weeks of weary imprisonment had passed away, William Jones presented himself before her. How her soul rose up in loathing at the sight of him who had so cruelly deceived and wronged her; who had blighted her young life, and who had made her a vile and despised outcast.

"Well, Mary," said he, in careless and indifferent tones, which revealed the innate depravity of his heart, "and how goes the world? I hope you are rather more reasonable than when we last saw each other."

"I suppose," said Mary, bitterly, "that it was not sufficient for you to blight my very existence and render life a burden to me, but you come here to taunt me with the misery which you have been the sole means of producing. Monster! how I loathe the very sight of you."

"Oh, very well," said he, coldly, turning on his heel as he spoke, "if that is the way you are going to talk, this interview may as well be ended at once. I hate scenes," and he started to leave the room.

"William! William!" she cried, almost sick with the horror at the prospect of another long period of solitary incarceration, "for God's sake

do not leave me here. Only take me away from this wretched place, and I will submit to anything you may require. Take me away, or kill me at once."

"Ah! now you begin to be a little more sensible," said he, returning into the room again, "and we will see what we can do. I will take you away upon your giving your solemn promise to obey my directions in two or three particulars which I deem of importance to my safety."

"Anything," she replied, eagerly; "I will promise anything so I but get out of this wretched prison."

"Well, then, listen. You are to promise not to attempt any communication with any of your friends. You are to go with me wherever I wish, and never say to anyone but that you are my wife. Lastly, you are not to indulge in any more such tantrums as you have been having of late, under penalty of my leaving you at once to shift for yourself. These are my terms. What say you?"

"I will do anything you wish to get away from here."

"Very good. Get yourself ready to leave, and I will go for a carriage at once," and so saying he left the room.

In a short time he returned with a carriage, into which he handed Mary, and springing in after her he took a seat by her side, and they whirled away in the direction of the depot. Arriving there they

entered the cars and were soon away, Mary knew not whither, nor did she much care. Any place were better, she thought, than the one she was leaving.

After riding some time in silence, she ventured to ask him where they were going.

"To my home," he replied, "and now you are to remember that you are my wife, Mrs. Hartford. My name is William Hartford—remember."

She could not understand why this change of name, but made no reply. After a ride of some fifteen hours they stopped in a large city where everything was strange to her.

"Where are we?" she at last ventured to ask.

"We are in the city of Pittsburgh," he replied, "and now remember what I told you. We are William Hartford and wife. If any one should ask you your name before marriage it was Smith. Do you hear?" he asked, with significant emphasis.

Mary heard, but she made no answer. He called a carriage and they entered, and as they drove off she asked where they were going, declaring that she would die before she would go to another such place as the one he had just taken her from.

"Is this your promise?" said he. "But never mind," he added hastily, "I am going to take you to respectable people. I am going where I have made arrangements for the board of myself and wife with a very respectable German family in a remote part of the city. So make yourself easy,

and if you conduct yourself properly you will have a good home and will have everything you want."

"I shall keep my promise," said Mary, in a choking voice, while her eyes filled with tears, "and now I want you to keep yours, and make me your wife in truth, as well as in name."

"Wait until I see how you conduct yourself. If you behave aright toward me I will do so," he replied, coldly.

By this time they had arrived at a neat white cottage almost in the suburbs of the city, and a lady of plain but highly respectable appearance came forward to assist Mary out of the carriage, bowing in recognition of Jones as she came up. She conducted them into the house, and as she was assisting Mary to remove her wrapping, asked Mary what her name was.

"Mary Jones," she replied.

At the mention of this name, Jones bit his lips, and the blood mounted into his forehead in a crimson flush. Her husband coming in a moment after, the landlady introduced them to him as Mr. Jones and lady. Jones was boiling over with rage, but he dare not contradict Mary for he felt sure that should he do so, she would not hesitate to reveal the true state of affairs between them. They soon retired to their own room, and then the pent-up wrath of Jones burst forth.

"What do you mean, madam?" he hissed through his clenched teeth. "Why did you not

do as I told you? Why did you say your name was Jones?"

"Because," replied Mary, "if my name is not Jones it ought to be, and I am determined to bear your name if you still refuse to marry me. You duped and betrayed me under that name, and I know you by no other, and you need not try to play it on any other."

Jones was furious with rage, but Mary was firm in her determination, and he was forced to yield. Besides it was now too late to repair the mischief she had already done, and he did not dare to wreak physical vengeance upon her, and after storming about the matter for some time, he finally submitted, only telling her that another transgression of his orders would result in his leaving her to shift for herself. And with this threat upon his lips, they descended to the dining-room, where he treated her with all the kindness and attention which a husband could bestow upon the most dearly beloved wife. Oh! the hypocrisy of the world.

For three weeks Mary and Jones remained at the house of Mr. Betts, and then Jones informed them that he was under the necessity of leaving for a short time to attend to some business of importance which required his presence elsewhere. The nature of the business he did not make known to their host and hostess, or to Mary—bad as she knew him to be, and as he knew she knew him to be, he dared not make known to her the nature of

the business which called him away—but we will avail ourselves of an author's privilege, and mention it.

He was at this time one of the organized gang of villains and desperadoes who infest all our large cities, and whose ramifications extend into almost every community, often including men whose position and standing in society place them above the reach of suspicion. Forgery, counterfeiting, larceny and pocket-picking are among the most ordinary crimes of these bandits, and not unfrequently their plans are so well laid, and their depredations so skillfully committed as to baffle discovery and set at fault the ingenuity of the most experienced detectives, while at other times some trifling event, carelessly overlooked, leads unerringly to the detection and arrest of the unlucky perpetrators. And on such occasions, neither time, trouble nor expense was spared by the gang to again set at liberty their confederates in crime.

It was precisely such an occasion as this which now summoned Jones from his home. In a descent made upon the coffers of a wealthy farmer, one of the most active and useful members of the gang had fallen into the iron clutches of the law, and was then in jail awaiting trial for his many crimes. Jones' skill in the use of the pen, and consequent value as a forger, had given him a high position in the gang, and to him was now assigned the task of devising and carrying out a plan for

the release of his fellow-villain from the confinement which was already so irksome, and which threatened such dire results in the future. And this was the business which now called him away. A letter received the evening before from one of the high officials of the infamous order had informed him what was expected of him, and he at once set about carrying out his instructions. It is entirely foreign to the purpose of this story to follow him through the organization and successful execution of his nefarious plan for evading the just vengeance of the law from the guilty head of his confederate—it is sufficient for us to say that his efforts were but too successful, and that one of the most notorious villains of the age was once more allowed to go unwhipped of justice.

Before leaving, he paid one month's board for Mary, gave her fifty dollars in money, and in an interview with Mrs. Betts urged her to do all she could to make Mary comfortable, and with a promise to her whom he had sadly deceived that he would soon return, and that he would redeem his promise and make her his wife upon rejoining her, he left her with all the simulation of affection which he could have displayed had he been one of the noblest of men and she his lawful wife.

But, however much Mrs. Betts may have been deceived by this pretended love, Mary was not. She had long since lost all confidence in him, and she regarded his departure at this time simply as a desertion. She did not believe he would ever

return, or that if he did he would ever marry her, and so redeem her from the life of shame and misery to which he had consigned her by his infamous villainy. But what could she do? She was an outcast and an object of contempt and scorn—return to her school she could not, nor to Dr. Bay's, and she saw no relief from the fearful bondage which oppressed her. But her necessities were provided for for the present, and she decided to remain where she was for a time, hoping almost against hope that something might turn up by which her deliverance could be effected.

Jones had been gone just a week when she received a letter from him. It was without any heading to indicate his whereabouts, and she tried in vain to decipher the post-mark, or to obtain the least clew even as to the direction in which he had gone. But although he had taken such evident pains to conceal his whereabouts, this letter was a great comfort to Mary and did much to restore her fast-waning confidence in him, for despite all his ill-treatment and deceit of her—the truth must be confessed—she loved him still. The letter was couched in very affectionate terms: spoke of his loneliness while away from her; his hopes of being able to rejoin her before long; renewed his promise of marriage upon his return, and so on. And like thousands of women who have loved and been deceived, and then have loved and trusted again, poor Mary hugged his false protestations and hollow promises to her heart, cherished them

in her inmost soul, and fondly believed he would yet redeem his plighted word.

Such is the long-suffering, patient love of a true-hearted, pure and noble woman. When the priceless treasures of her heart have once been laid upon the altar of the shrine of her affections, the flame of her devotion gleams brightly and steadily athwart the horizon of life, unquenched and unquenchable, ever cheering and vivifying us with its ardent rays, and though the luster of its burning may be dimmed and even partially obscured by the cold ashes of bitterness, neglect or abuse, let but the slightest breath of affection fall upon it, and the flame once more streams up bright and pure and beautiful as before. So it was with Mary. She loved William Jones with all the ardor and unselfish devotion of her pure and noble nature, and though his deceit and abuse of her had for a time destroyed, or rather suppressed, her confidence in him, but these few words of kindness and love were necessary to cause her to forget all the wrong of which she had been the victim, and once more trust the words which he had already so often broken.

The letter informed her that it would be out of his power to return as soon as he had hoped and expected to when he left; that he could not now tell just when he would come, but in a few weeks at the farthest; that circumstances would not admit of his writing again until he came, and wound up by telling her to keep up her spirits, not to be

uneasy and he would be with her again in four or five weeks at the most. And Mary, poor dupe that she was! allowed herself to be cheered and comforted by these promises and these honeyed words, and sat down calmly to wait the period of their fulfillment.

But the longest period set for his coming passed by; then a week followed; then a month, two months, and still he came not. What could it mean?

"'Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.'"

And so it was with Mary. As the days slowly glided away into eternity, she still on each returning evening whispered to herself, "He will surely come to-morrow," until at last even the light of this hope faded out in her bosom, and she slowly settled down into the heart-breaking conviction that she was really and finally deserted. And as this conclusion forced itself down into her mind, she tried to reflect upon the awful condition to which her association with him had reduced her, until it seemed to her that her brain must go wild.

At last in a sort of frenzy of despair she determined to write to Dr. Bay, confessing all, telling them how she had been duped and deceived by the villainy of Jones, and imploring them once more to afford her the shelter which had so long been her protection and safety. And with her eyes almost blinded by scalding tears she seated herself to her task.

I wish it were in my power to reproduce before

the reader this sorrowful letter. Could each one see it as I have seen it, all blotted and stained with tears, full of heart-broken moanings and bitter self-reproaches—the vocal utterance of that repentance and remorse which was consuming her soul—it is not within the compass of any human heart to withhold its forgiveness for the error she committed in remaining with William Jones after she discovered the villainy of his black heart, and learned how he had deceived her. Perchance but very few of my readers would have had the courage and hardihood under the same circumstances to have done what she should have done—abandoned him at once, and denouncing him to the world, have trusted a generous public for protection against him—but still her compliance with his demands were none the less an error for which there can be no apology, and for which nothing but the most sincere contrition and repentance can in any degree atone. And that Mary then experienced this repentance, this letter affords abundant evidence. But the document has been mislaid, and after the most diligent search, I regret to say that I am unable even to furnish the reader a copy of it.

At length her missive was completed, and placing it carefully in her pocket, she started for the post-office to mail it. It was with a beating heart that she went forth to make this last effort to escape from the vortex of sin and shame which had so well nigh overwhelmed her. Judge then of

her dismay when she opened the front door and stood face to face with him from whose clutches she was just trying to escape, the destroyer of her peace—William Jones! She reeled as if struck by a bullet, but recovering her self-possession in a moment, drew her veil more closely about her face and attempted to pass him without speaking. But he seized her by the arm and led her back into the room she had just left.

"Ah, ha! Miss," he hissed in a savage tone, "so you are above speaking to William Jones, are you?"

She was so dumbfounded and terrified at the evil passions flaming from his eyes, that she was unable to reply.

"Perhaps," he continued, with cool, diabolical villainy, "you are sorry to see me. If so I am ready to leave you."

"Yes, William," she replied, with the courage of despair, "I am sorry to see you. I wish you had not come back, for then I would have been happy once more. But now all my hopes are blasted."

"Pray, tell me, if it suits your ladyship," said he, sneeringly, "what you would have done to support yourself in this new-found happiness. Perhaps you have another lover who can do more for you than I can. If so, it is all right, for it is about all I can do to support my wife and family without spending much money on you."

"Your wife and children," she murmured, with

a sickening sensation at her heart, for she did not dream that he had merely invented this ready lie to facilitate his desertion of her.

"Yes, my wife and children," he replied, without regard to her intense agony. "I was married and had three children long before I ever saw your baby face. Hence you see the necessity of economy in my dealings with such as you."

But she heard not the taunt contained in the last sentence, for overcome by the violence of her emotions she had swooned and fallen to the floor. He made no effort to revive her, but bending over her lifeless form he coolly proceeded to examine her pocket, and of course found the letter she had just written. Opening it with the skill of his practiced villainy, he read it through.

"Ah, ha!" said he to himself, "this is what she was up to. Well, I don't think I am quite ready to have Dr. Bay come down on me with this letter to stimulate and guide his vengeance. I'll fix that if she only don't revive too soon."

And seating himself at the table he proceeded to write a note giving a brief account of Mary's death and burial, signed it "Martin Harris," put it in the envelope in place of the one she had just written, and carefully sealing it, restored it to her pocket, she remaining all the time in a state of unconsciousness. He then threw water in her face and she opened her eyes, but immediately closed them when she saw him bending above her.

"Come," said he, roughly, "we've had enough

of this. You had better get up and let us come to some understanding."

She rose without replying, and he assisted her to a chair.

"Now," said he, "I am ready to leave, since you wish it. Here," he continued, producing a roll of bills from which he counted out fifty dollars, "is all the money I can afford to give you. And I suspect you had better leave this place. They think you are my wife now, and if you go away they will never know any better."

She took the money and simply said, "I wish you would leave me—I want to go out."

"Very well," said he, taking his hat, "I hope you may get along pleasantly with your new lover."

"William Jones," said she, turning toward him with flashing eyes, "beware how you trifle with me, for I am desperate. I have no lover, as you ought to know. I am going to Dr. Bay's, the only true friend I ever had."

"Oh! oh!" said he sneeringly, "what a pretty thing it is when it is angry. Going to Dr. Bay's, are you? That is very bright. Do you suppose they will have you in their house? I should rather think not. That is the last place you would find shelter, but you can try it. I should think, however, you had better write and announce your coming before you go blundering in there. You might get turned out again, you know, and that would not be so pleasant."

"For mercy's sake, leave me," she murmured faintly, her momentary flash of anger having left her as suddenly as it came, and shuddering, she covered her face with her hands.

"Certainly, my love, since you desire it. Good-bye. Happiness attend you," and turning on his heel he left the room.

Left to herself, the pent up emotion of her soul gave way and she burst into a flood of tears. "Oh! God," she moaned in the bitterness of anguish, "grant me Thy strength to bear this heavy burden of sorrow." But no prayer for vengeance upon her seducer arose to her lips or welled up in her heart. Oh! no. Her soul was too pure and tender to forget for one moment that He has said, "Vengeance is mine and I will repay."

Long time she sat thus, then remembering her letter and the mighty interest to her depending thereon (she knew nothing of the fraud which had been practiced upon her), she felt in her pocket, found it safe, as she supposed, and removing so far as she was able the traces of tears from her countenance, she went and mailed it; then returned and sat down to think over her situation and what was to be done.

She had fifty dollars in money, but she owed something on her board—nevertheless she thought that would last her until her letter would reach her home when she made no doubt the Doctor would hasten at once to her relief. And with this pleasing reflection she solaced herself to something like

composure, and at tea time met the family with but few traces of extraordinary emotion. Poor child! she little imagined the effect which would really be produced by the letter from which she hoped and anticipated so much.

CHAPTER XI.

LET us return for a short time to the residence of Dr. Bay, and contemplate the effect upon that happy household of Mary's sudden and almost mysterious disappearance.

As the reader is already aware, Mrs. Bay had written to Mrs. Shepley that she was coming to visit Mary on the Saturday following her flight with Jones, and on Friday a letter had arrived at the Huntingdon postoffice for Mary requesting her to meet them at the depot with the carriage on the following day, but of course, this letter was never received. It was, however, brought to the Shepley school with the rest of the mail; and being mailed at Kittaning, where Mary was supposed to be, excited some suspicion that all was not right, especially as Jones had not been seen since her departure.

On Saturday, Mrs. Bay, accompanied by Harry, left home for the Shepley school. Arriving at the depot, in Huntingdon, they were not a little surprised at seeing neither Mary nor the carriage waiting for them, and at once became apprehensive of some evil, though their worst imagining fell far short of the reality. They anxiously inquired of the by-standers if any of the Shepleys or their pupils were ill, and upon being assured that those of whom they inquired knew of no sickness there,

Mrs. Bay became so impatient to know what could have prevented Mary from complying with their request of the day before that she could hardly wait while Harry found a carriage to take them to their destination.

Arriving there, they met Mrs. Shepley, whose surprise at seeing them was only equaled by theirs at not meeting Mary.

"Where is my child?" said Mrs. Bay, without even waiting for the customary salutations, "and why did she not meet us at the depot as usual?"

"Your child!" said Mrs. Shepley in a tone of astonishment too genuine to doubt its sincerity, "is she not at home?"

"At home? why no. Why should she be at home? You do not mean to say she is not here."

"I do, indeed."

"Where is she then? Oh! Mrs. Shepley if you have failed in your duty to her, I will hold you to a terrible responsibility," said Mrs. Bay, almost wild with alarm and terror of—she knew not what.

"Calm yourself, my dear Mrs. Bay," replied Mrs. Shepley, though she was herself but little less excited than the lady she addressed. "There is some terrible mistake here, but let us hope for the best."

"But where is my child?"

"I will tell you all I know of her. This letter," said Mrs. Shepley, producing the one Mary had handed to her, "was brought to me by Mary her-

self last Tuesday evening. I was not a little surprised, having but the day before received one from you informing me that you were coming today, but, of course, I could not say anything, and the next morning she left."

"Let me see that letter," and Mrs. Bay glanced hastily over its contents. "I never wrote that letter in the world," said she. "Oh! Mrs. Shepley, my child is forever lost, I fear. Did any one go with her?"

"Yes, Mr. Jones went to see her to the depot; sent a carriage back by a boy, with a message to the effect that he had decided to accompany Mary all the way, and has not been here since. We supposed he was visiting at your house, but I see it all now," she continued, speaking rapidly. "You say you never wrote that letter. It has been forged for the purpose of deceiving me, and she and William Jones have eloped together."

Mrs. Bay covered her face with her hands and sank back in a chair, almost fainting.

"Oh! Mary, Mary," she moaned aloud, "where are you? How could you deceive us all?"

"Be calm, my dear aunt," said Harry, who had silently listened to the sad disclosure, his voice tremulous with emotion, "Mary has not deceived us. She has been the victim of the basest treachery and deceit, and I will find her if she is alive, and bitterly shall her wrongs be avenged. That villain Jones is at the bottom of the whole of it, and God being my helper, I solemnly swear never

to rest until he has answered for his crime against her."

"Oh! Harry," almost shrieked Mrs. Bay, "find her and restore her to me, and I will forever bless you."

"She shall be found if she is alive," he replied, his fine dark eyes suffused with tears, and every muscle quivering with emotion, "and fearful vengeance shall be taken for her wrongs."

And assisting his aunt to a room where she reclined upon a bed, he hastened at once to the telegraph office to summon Dr. Bay to the scene.

The doctor came on the first train, and upon arriving he was as much surprised at the situation of affairs as any one, and his emotion was little less violent than that of his wife. He had learned to love Mary as his own child, and her fall had almost overwhelmed his heart with its weight of sorrow, but like Harry, he recognized the necessity of immediate action, and together they set about the apparently almost hopeless task of finding the lost one.

Their first step was to find the boy who had brought back the carriage on the morning of their flight, and then to their astonishment they learned for the first time that Jones and Mary had gone to another station to take the cars. Thither they went, and were there fortunate enough to find a man who knew Jones by sight and had been present when he purchased two tickets for Blairsville, and had seen him enter the cars in company with

a young lady. Of course this could be none other than Mary, and to Blairsville they went, where they succeeded in tracing the fugitives to the house at which they had stopped.

But there all trace of them was lost. The people at the house were unable or unwilling to give any account of their movements from that time forward, and after having spent several days in a vain attempt to ascertain in what direction they had gone, they were compelled reluctantly to give it up and return home.

But the search was by no means discontinued. The next step was to advertise in the papers, offering liberal rewards for any information which would lead to her discovery, and patiently they waited for some response, but in vain. This effort was as bootless as the other, and Harry then employed two or three professional detectives to continue the search. Their efforts, however, though stimulated by proffers of the most ample compensation, were equally unavailing with those of Harry and the doctor, and it seemed that they must fail. Mary could not have been more completely hidden had the angry ocean opened its mouth and swallowed her up, than she seemed to be in the maelstrom of sin and vice in which she was engulfed.

The days grew into weeks, and weeks into months, and still no tidings from the lost one, and still Harry was as unremitting in his search for her as ever, and still he confidently asserted that

sooner or later he should find her. But suspense and grief were making fearful inroads upon the aged form of Dr. Bay. His whole soul was bound up in Mary, and her departure from the path of rectitude preyed upon his spirit and was rapidly wearing out his life, and it soon became painfully evident that he would not endure the struggle much longer. His wife felt the loss as keenly as he did, but her spirits were more elastic than his. She, too, possessed, in her sincere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, a sustaining power which he lacked, and the effects of the blow were less visible in her than in him.

At last the mail brought a letter to Dr. Bay. He started as his eye fell upon the address, for he recognized Mary's well-remembered hand-writing. With trembling fingers he broke the seal, glanced over its contents, and with a low groan allowed it to fall from his nerveless hand to the floor. Terrified at what she saw, Mrs. Bay hastened forward, picked up the letter and read it. It was the one which Jones had substituted in lieu of the one written by Mary to inform her parents of her whereabouts, and beg their permission to return to the shelter of their home, and with the contents of which the reader is already somewhat familiar.

The receipt of this letter was the finishing blow to Dr. Bay. Of course he did not believe that Mary was dead, for there was her own handwriting upon the envelope to contradict such a supposition, but he regarded it as evidence of her entire

abandonment of a life of virtue, and he never recovered from the shock. In a few short weeks his weeping wife and nephew followed his remains to the tomb. Ah! how much of pain and anguish the heartless brutality of man causes to his fellow man!

Harry, however, was not disposed to give up the chase, notwithstanding the opinion of his lamented uncle. As soon as the last honors had been paid to his memory, he set out for Pittsburgh; that being the place at which the letter was mailed, nothing doubting, that there he should be able to gain some tidings of her whom he had so loved. But he was destined never to reach the end of his journey.

Our readers cannot have forgotten the terrible calamity on the Pennsylvania Central Railroad about ten years since, which filled so many happy homes, not only in that State but elsewhere, with the voice of lamentation and mourning. For some time it was impossible to obtain correct lists of the killed and wounded, and hence to the grief of those who knew the extent of their losses was added the agony of suspense of the thousands who supposed they might have friends upon the ill-fated train, and of whose fate they were unable to gain any tidings.

Harry Bay was one of the victims of this sad disaster. As he was hastening on his mission of love and mercy, without the least warning, and without the fault of any one, the calamity over-

took the fated train, and he, like many fellow-passengers, was in a moment buried beneath the debris of wrecked and ruined cars. When extricated it was found that he had sustained fearful contusions of the head and body, and though still living, his injuries were at once pronounced fatal. He never regained his senses or spoke, but in a few hours his soul winged its way from its mangled tenement of clay to the bosom of his Father and his God.

Mrs. Bay was now left alone in the world; her only near relatives were gone, and she was getting old and feeble, and bowed beneath the weight of the fearful trials which had been meted out to her in such rapid succession. She was still able to say, "Thy will be done," but she felt that her trials were almost too heavy to be borne alone and without the society and sympathy of friends. She accordingly decided to accept the invitation of a young married lady by the name of Annie Lake, who had been an intimate friend of Mary in her happier days, to make her home with her, and proceeded to sell her house and furniture preparatory to doing so. She almost wept at the thought of the dear old place, where she had lived so long and so happily, passing into the hands of strangers, but there seemed no help for it, and so the sacrifice was made.

Behold, then, the results of the villainy of Jones! Mary is an outcast; her adopted father hurried to his grave by grief at her supposed

defection; Harry a victim of disaster encountered in his efforts to reclaim her; her mother among comparative strangers, an exile from the home which would soon cease to be known as the residence of the kind-hearted doctor—an entire family, as it were, destroyed, and even their abode no longer known among friends and neighbors. Surely, unless his heart be harder than the nether millstone, the pangs of remorse must haunt his hours, both sleeping and waking, with terrors beyond the power of human tongue to tell; but no, the wretch who, for the sake of a momentary gratification, can deliberately set about the ruin of an innocent and confiding girl, must possess a conscience incapable of being moved by anything short of the thunders of Divine vengeance, which he will surely hear at the great day when all shall stand before the bar of the immutable Judge to receive the reward of the deeds done on earth.

But Jones' evil work was not yet completed. In order to drive Mary to despair, and, if possible, prevent her ever returning to the life of virtue and peace from which he had taken her (so desperate does the constant contact with evil render the human heart), he had still another forgery to commit, and, without his seared conscience uttering a single reproof, he set about it, believing that in so doing he would lessen the chances of his detection and well-merited punishment.

The reader will readily conceive the intense eagerness with which Mary looked for the arrival

of an answer to the letter which she supposed she had sent to her parents, and which she fondly hoped would be the means of her restoration. At length came a letter bearing the Kittaning post-mark and addressed to her in the well-known handwriting of her adopted father. With what trembling eagerness she broke the seal, but at the first glance what bitter disappointment filled her soul. The letter was as follows (the author has read it):

"UNGRATEFUL CHILD: Having left us in the way you did, after all that we had done for you, never expect to darken our doors again. Far better had it been for us to have let you died in infancy under the treatment of Mrs. Brown, than to have taken you to our bosoms and nursed you as we have, only that you might cover us all with infamy and disgrace. You have brought our gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and we never wish to see or hear from you again.

Your deeply-wronged friends,

"DR. AND MRS. BAY."

Mary could hardly read this cruel letter to the close, and then moaning, "I am lost, I am lost," she threw herself on the bed and gave way to the violence of her emotions. "Oh!" she sobbed, "had they but sent me one kind word, they might have saved me, but now I am forever lost, and I care not what I do, or what becomes of me." Poor child! She little suspected that Dr. Bay

had neither seen her letter nor written this one, but that by the machinations of her seducer her own letter had been prevented from reaching him, and that the one before her was the work of the same pen whose diabolical skill had been so potent in working her ruin; but, as the reader understands, such was the fact.

But violent outbursts of grief seldom last long; they wear themselves out by their own force, and so it was in the present instance. Mary in due time became comparatively calm, and, after reflecting upon the situation in which she was placed, she resolved to make one more effort to escape from the fate impending over her, and toward the consummation of which circumstances seemed to be hurrying her with such frightful rapidity; but how should she set about it? What could she do? The blackness of despair almost enveloped her as she again turned to contemplate the horrid future, deserted by all her friends, as she believed herself to be, but resolutely shutting her eyes to the horrid nightmare which was slowly creeping upon her. She determined to acquaint her landlady with the situation of affairs and seek her advice. So accustomed had Mary been all her life to depend upon some one else; so ignorant was she of the world and its ways, that she dared not adventure any means of escape from the dilemma in which she was placed without the advice and encouragement of some one older and more experienced than herself.

It was after dark when she sought Mrs. Betts and told her the true relation existing between Jones and herself. She imparted to her, without reserve, all the circumstances attending the establishment of that relation; how she was cast off by her friends; her almost despair, and her intense desire to escape from the hideous fate which appeared awaiting her, and asked her advice and assistance.

But neither her pitiful tale, nor the tears which accompanied its recital, awakened any sympathy or compassion in the heart of her listener. She only grasped at the fact that the weeping girl before her was a social outcast, and with a spirit of uncharitableness, all too common in the world, she regarded her as a moral outcast also, her tale as a sheer fabrication to excuse her criminality, and her tears as the mere display of hypocritical emotion, instead of tears of penitence and sorrow, and she regarded her house and herself as contaminated and defiled by Mary's presence there.

"You vile creature," she replied, as Mary finished her sorrowful tale, "how dare you come among decent, respectable people, and conduct yourself in the way you have? But you shall not stay here another hour. Pack up your things and leave here at once. I do not believe a word of your story about having been deceived, and all that sort of thing. Women like you always have plenty of lies at hand to excuse themselves. So you can just get away from here at once."

Mary was so thunderstruck by this violent outburst that for a moment she was utterly incapable of a reply. She had expected sympathy and kindness—she met reproach and contumely. At length she faltered a request "to be allowed to remain there till morning."

"Not another hour," said the harsh and imperious woman. "You have already disgraced my house enough, and you shall go at once."

"But what can I do?" pleaded Mary, "if you turn me out of doors at this time of night? I know not where to go or what will become of me."

"It is no difference to me where you go," was the unfeeling answer. "Such as you can always find places enough. You can go wherever you like or wherever you can find shelter. But you have imposed upon respectable people long enough."

"Madam," said Mary, with forced and unnatural calmness and dignity, "you have said enough. I will go, and if at some future time you shall, perchance, hear that I am lost and undone: the degraded being you now take me for, and beyond the hope of redemption, you can console yourself with the reflection that it was your cruelty this night which drove me to the fate from which, God knows, it is my sincere desire to escape."

"Let us have no more of your prating, but get yourself ready and leave my house immediately," said the woman, leaving the room in which this interview had taken place.

For a moment Mary was almost paralyzed with horror; then murmuring, "God help me, the whole world is against me," she mechanically proceeded to pack her trunk, and in half an hour was standing in the streets of Pittsburgh amid darkness and woe; a wretched outcast, without even a shelter for her head. Where should she go? What would become of her? These vital questions forced themselves upon her with the most painful, fearful distinctness, and still she was unable to answer them, and still they again and again obtruded themselves, until her brain fairly whirled.

But why follow her through her adventures on this fearful night, or recount the wretchedness of her plight, as she wandered alone and shelterless throughout the whole of that livelong night? The reader may imagine all he or she can of the horrors of such a situation to one who had been reared amid the refinement and luxury which had characterized her life, and they will then fall short of the sad reality.

And even when the morning came her situation was scarcely improved in the least. A stranger in a large city, without means even to pay a week's board, all unused to work for a livelihood, and with scarce the ability or knowledge to do so, and with neither influence nor recommendations to enable her to procure work, even had she been qualified to perform it, her situation was indeed most pitiable. True, she succeeded in finding board and shelter for the time being, but how

was she to pay for it? Her wardrobe was limited, and even if she resorted to disposing of that to pay her moderate bills, it would last but a short time, and when that was gone what was she to do? But she had no other resource, and piece by piece her clothing went, while she vainly sought employment of some kind at which she could support herself.

It may seem strange to my readers that a girl of Mary's intelligence should have sunk into such abject poverty and destitution, but it must be borne in mind that she had been tenderly reared and was ignorant of the world and its ways, and this, together with her naturally timid and retiring disposition, totally unfitted her to battle with the stern realities of life! Alas! how many a poor fallen woman has been driven to a life of shame and degradation by the same causes now so thickly clustering around, and so fearfully pressing upon, poor Mary! What a fearful account was her wretchedness and misery daily heaping up against William Jones in the eternal court! How would his conscience, if not entirely deadened by contact with sin and vice, have smitten him could he have known of the suffering entailed upon this lovely and innocent girl by his villainy?

CHAPTER XII.

THREE years have passed since the close of the last chapter, and Mary, after numerous adventures, which it were vain and profitless to try to recount, was living in Cincinnati in the same squalid want and misery which environed her in Pittsburgh. Indeed, the miseries through which she passed would hardly be believed if detailed. Often suffering for food, sometimes even without a shelter for her head, her clothing (what little she had left) in rags and scarcely sufficient to hide her nakedness, she was indeed in a most pitiable condition. One could hardly realize the existence of such destitution in this happy land of ours, but that such cases are—to the shame of our charity be it said—by no means rare.

But the reader will ask how she came to be in Cincinnati? Let us explain. This was in 1864.

Mary who had long since despaired of earning anything like a comfortable subsistence in Pittsburgh, resolved to go to Cincinnati, and by partially begging her way, she succeeded in getting there. But the difficulties of her position were by no means surmounted upon her arrival there. The same causes which combined to prevent her from accomplishing anything at the former place still followed her to the latter, and though in the hurry of military preparation, applicants for employ-

ment were by no means closely scrutinized, still her employment in every place she tried was but temporary. Her want of skill and physical strength caused her soon to be discharged to give place to those who could accomplish more than she could, though not more willing to do all within her power, and again she was reduced to the verge of starvation.

For months, then, she endured all the wretchedness which had been her portion since her desertion by Jones. Sleeping in a miserable garret, often for days together without a morsel of food, save what she could beg, and then again earning a mere trifle by the performance of the most menial tasks, while she wore none but the cheapest, poorest, and too often raggedest of clothes, her life was miserable indeed. And to have seen her pinched and bowed figure, surely no one would have recognized her as the lovely and happy Mary of former days, such fearful inroads had want and misery made upon her former rare beauty.

One day, impelled by absolute starvation, for she had eaten nothing for upwards of twenty-four hours, she was on the street for the purpose of begging the wherewith to procure a meal of victuals, when a gentleman in the uniform of a first lieutenant of the United States army passed by. Something in his open, generous countenance encouraged her to prefer her piteous suit to him, and as he turned to respond to her appeal, the glitter of a Masonic pin on his bosom attracted her attention.

She had never thought of appealing to this noble fraternity before, but with the gleam of this jewel came a sudden thought that this was to redeem and save her.

Pointing to the pin, she asked in tones of earnest, trembling eagerness:

"Do you belong to that society?"

"I do," replied the lieutenant, in some surprise, "but why do you ask?"

"I will tell you,' she replied, speaking rapidly and eagerly, while her eyes filling with tears and the trembling of her voice told how deeply she was moved, "the time was once when I had some claims upon that fraternity. My father who died when I was a mere child was a Mason, and my adopted father, if he be yet alive, occupies an exalted position in the same order."

"What then," he asked "is the meaning of your being here, a beggar on the street?"

In answer to his astonished inquiry, she told him without reserve the history of her life for the past four years; how she had been betrayed and deserted; how her friends had cast her off and disowned her; how she had struggled with poverty and wretchedness—in short, all with which the reader is familiar.

Lieutenant ——— heard her painful story with attentive interest. He was no mean judge of human nature, and he was convinced the girl spoke the truth; while her appearance confirmed her narrative in the most emphatic manner. At

its close he asked her where she lived. She blushed violently at this question, for the remembrance of the miserable garret where amid filth and vermin she had found her wretched lodgings for the last few months, and the idea of calling a stranger there sent the warm blood to her cheek and tinged it with something of the beauty of former days, but which long years of misery had sadly faded. After a moment's hesitation, however, she told him the street and number.

"I will go with you there," said he, kindly, "and we will see what can be done for you."

And drawing her arm within his own he led her away, never once heeding the smiles and wondering looks of the bystanders. For was he not obeying the Divine command to succor the poor and the needy, as well as fulfilling the precepts of the order of which he was a worthy member, and so long as he trod the path of duty what cared he for the gibes and sneers of the world?

But if he pitied her upon hearing her story, how was his heart moved when he beheld the squalid misery by which she was surrounded in the miserable place she termed her lodgings? It was utterly devoid of even the smallest comfort; not a chair graced the room, while a pile of what had once been shoddy blankets, but which were now little better than rags, was the only apology for a bed, and a small tin wash basin and a piece of broken looking glass furnished the only convenience for the toilet.

The lieutenant looked around in unfeigned astonishment.

"And is this," he asked, "your only place of abode, and these the only comforts you have?"

"For months this has been my only home," she replied, weeping, as she contrasted her present situation with what it had been before her acquaintance with Jones.

"You shall never come here again," said the young officer, impulsively. "I will go at once and procure a suitable boarding-place for you until I can find a situation where you can earn an honorable and comfortable livelihood."

"God will bless you and repay you for your kindness to one who is more than an orphan," said Mary, falling on her knees before him and bursting into tears of gratitude. "May he reward you, for I never can."

"I ask no reward for simply doing my duty," said he, his own eyes becoming suspiciously moist at the sight of her emotion, and turning, he hastened away on his errand of mercy.

In an hour he returned and told her he had secured temporary board for her with a poor but respectable family, who would furnish her plain but comfortable accommodations until she could find employment suited to her.

"And now," said he, "let us leave this den forever."

She was too much overjoyed to hesitate, and in a few minutes she had left her wretched shelter,

as she fondly hoped, forever. For, cruelly deceived and betrayed as she had once been, she still had confidence—the earnest, trusting confidence of a child—that her new-found friend was really what he professed to be, a friend indeed. And the sequel proved that in this instance, at least, her confidence had not been misplaced.

They soon reached her new home, and giving her some money to enable her to procure better apparel than the rags she now wore, Lieutenant ——— left her, promising to call again in the evening. For somehow his heart had been touched with a strange interest in the girl whom he had thus rescued from the very depths of poverty and wretchedness, and, aside from doing his duty toward her, he desired to know more of her than he had thus far been able to learn. He felt certain she possessed a warm, trusting, confiding heart, and a refined, generous nature, which only required the magic touch of affection and kindness to develop her into a magnificent woman—one to whom any man might well pour out his heart's choicest treasures. True, her life had been blighted, and the horizon of her morning sky had been o'ercast with thick clouds by the arts of a villain, but still he believed she was not past redemption, and once redeemed he felt that the devotion of her life would richly repay the one by whom that redemption should be effected.

For about a week she remained at the boarding-place which the kindness of her friend had pro-

vided for her, and at the end of that time one would have scarcely recognized her as the half-starved wretch who accosted Lieutenant ——— in the street. She was neatly though plainly clad, and the genial air of kindness had banished the haggard and care-worn appearance which then pervaded her features, and she once more appeared something like her own former self.

At last the lieutenant informed her that he had procured a situation for her in a highly-respectable family to do plain sewing and care for the children, at wages which would be sufficient to afford her a comfortable support—that he had spoken to the lady of the house of her as his sister, and that she must carry out the innocent deception, as she was a Mason's daughter.

"But, after all," said he, "I am not sure that it is a deception, for are you not really and truly my sister? I am a Christian."

Mary was too thankful for her deliverance to refuse obedience to his slightest request, although, as the sequel proved, in this "innocent deception," as he termed it, was the germ of much future trouble and sorrow to her.

Entering the carriage he had brought, they were driven to the residence of Mr. ———, a well-known army contractor. It was a fine, comfortable-looking mansion, and Mary's heart was elate with joy as she contrasted it with the miserable home she had lately occupied. Leaping out, the lieutenant assisted her to alight, and led her through the

well-laid-out grounds to the door.

"Remember," whispered he, as he rang the bell, "keep your secret," and the next moment she was introduced to the lady of the house.

Mary did not really like her appearance. She was richly, but rather gaudily and showily dressed, while her manners and the tone of her conversation were those of a person who had not long been accustomed to good society, but rather of one who, having suddenly become wealthy, attached undue importance to the possession of the riches so suddenly acquired. In short, she was one of the somewhat numerous class of the present day known as "shoddy aristocracy." From a small but shrewd and enterprising country merchant, her husband, by the immense profits of his army contracts—profits which too generally came out of the comfort and welfare of the poor men who were periling life and limb in defense of the country upon whose troubles he was fattening—had suddenly become an immense capitalist—one who counted his dollars by hundreds of thousands—and his wife fancied that the wearing of rich clothes, and the assumption of lordly airs were the only means of showing off her superiority to the poor creatures who were dependent upon the wages received from her for their daily bread. Such, alas! for weak human nature, is too often the effect of suddenly-acquired wealth and ease, the possessors forgetting that as their riches came in a moment, as it were, so a breath might sweep

them away, and reduce them again to the level of poverty from which they had just escaped, and that after all, worth not wealth, is the true criterion of merit.

Neverthless she spoke kindly, in her way, to the girl who was soon to become her servant, and Mary was too thankful for her deliverance to criticise too closely her new mistress. 'Tis true she told her companion privately that she was not, by her appearance, very much prepossessed in her favor, but still she had no doubt she could get along very well with her, and nothing should induce her to thwart the plans he had formed for her redemption. "It shall not be my fault," she said, "if I do not stay here until you direct otherwise."

For several days the lieutenant called to see her each evening, and then he told her his regiment was ordered to the seat of war, and he must leave her. She shed many tears at this announcement, and surely her conduct at parting was not such as to give the lie to the story he had told Mrs. ——— relative to the relationship between himself and Mary. His kindness to her had so won upon her feelings that she could not have felt worse at parting with him had he been her own brother, and besides she felt some indefinable dread of evil again overtaking her when she should no longer have the protection of his influence, his strong will and his manly arm, and bitterly she wept as she clung to him in that sad hour. But the stern mandate of duty was irresistible, and kissing her

with all a brother's warmth and fervor, he whispered to her to be of good cheer and all would yet be well; told her to write him often, and hastened away to join his command which had already embarked on board a steamer for Nashville.

For some time Mary got along very pleasantly in her new home. Her duties were not very onerous; the entire family were kind to her in their way, and the three children, who were much of the time under her chage, soon learned to love her dearly, especially the youngest. The fiery furnace in which she had been tried had intensified the natural gentleness of her spirit, and made her seem to them more like an angel than a human being, and soon gave her an influence over them which never waned during the whole of her stay there. She heard constantly and regularly from her friend and benefactor, and she really felt as though her troubles were forever past.

"Let no one call himself happy till death," said Solon, and he said wisely. A period was approaching in the life of our heroine when the fair fabric of her present happiness was to be shattered at one fell blow—temporary, perchance, it might be, but nevertheless the temple she had erected was to be laid in ruins. As yet the storm by which this destruction was to be effected gave not even the slightest muttered warning of its approach, but it was none the less surely coming.

The first blow was a letter from the regiment to which her friend belonged, written in a strange

hand, and conveying the sad intelligence that he had received a wound which was by the surgeon pronounced fatal, and that he could probably survive but a few hours—a day or two at most. She looked at the date of the latter—it was more than a week old—and he must even now be in his grave, and again she was alone in the wide, wide world, with no one whom she could call friend, or to whom she could turn for assistance in time of trouble. True he had been far away from her almost ever since she had known him, but still she felt that there was a bond between them which united them to each other and upon which she could rely with the utmost confidence, but now he was gone, and alone and unaided she must fight the weary battle of life in the future, and she wept tears of sincere affection and regret.

But time in his flight brings healing to all, and so it was to poor Mary. Though she forgot not her friend and his kindness to her, nor ceased to mourn him with sincerest sorrow, her grief as a matter of course in time became less poignant, while the kindness of her employers, and the affection with which the children soon learned to regard her, did much to wean her from the contemplation of her grief. But a more fearful stroke was preparing for her; one which for a time threatened to wreck forever her frail bark and cast her once more into the sea of misery from which she had so lately effected her escape.

She had been about three months at Mrs. ——'s

house, when the incident to which allusion is made took place. Mrs. —— had some of her "shoddy" aristocratic friends taking tea with her, and among them was a gentleman by the name of Tompkins. A highly cultivated and intelligent lady, possessed of Mary's natural refinement (which even the demoralizing life she had led had been unable to destroy), could find but little in common with the gay and somewhat boisterous party which filled Mrs. ——'s rooms, and hence, though Mary was present for a time, she was very silent and reserved, and as soon as politeness would admit, she slipped away and sought the solitude of her own room. Arriving there she threw herself into an arm chair and was soon lost in a reverie from which, however, she was shortly roused by the violent throwing open of her door and the impetuous entrance of Mrs. ——. Her countenance was flushed with anger, or some other violent passion, and her whole frame was quivering with excitement. So unnatural was her appearance that Mary for a time was unable to say a word, but rising in some alarm to her feet, she waited to hear what the lady had to say. And she had not long to wait.

Advancing closer to her she hissed: "You are a pretty creature, are you not? To think of your coming into a decent, respectable house from such a place as you did, and with your innocent, saintly face to palm yourself off as a decent woman. For three months you have deceived us all, but I

have found you out at last, and out of this house you go this very night."

"What do you mean?" faintly murmured Mary, the blood standing still in her veins and a cold tremor passing over her from head to foot, for she saw at once, as she imagined, an end to all her hopes of salvation.

"Oh! yes. It is all very well for you to play innocent, and pretend you do not know what I mean. It is all of a piece, and it won't do now. Pack your traps, I tell you, and be off."

"But first tell me of what you accuse me," said Mary, though her heart told her all too truly what was the cause of this attack.

"You impudent hussy," replied the woman, "to ask of what you are accused. You know very well what it is. Tell me, did you not live at Pittsburgh with a man by the name of Jones, and did you not come, after nobody knows what other disgraceful scenes, to my house to impose upon us?"

In her blind rage she had forgotten that Mary was not the author of the deception, but that the lieutenant, who was quite a favorite of hers, was the responsible party. But this unmerited taunt, and the implied attack upon the character of her deceased friend, aroused in Mary something of the spirit of combativeness, and her voice was firmer and steadier when she again spoke.

"What you say about myself, madam, is true—what you say about my deceased friend, Lieuten-

ant ——, is not," she replied. "That I lived with Jones at the place you mentioned is true; but it is not true that I ever sustained any degrading or disgraceful relation to that brave soldier and true, noble man. We met by accident; he learned my wretched, suffering condition, and as a Mason, adopted me as his sister, placed me in a position to earn an honest and honorable livelihood by the labor of my own hands. This was the whole of our relationship to each other, and I will not tamely submit to have his memory slandered, whatever may be my merits or demerits. He at least is above reproach, and could he burst the bounds of the grave in which his mangled remains now lie moldering, his lips would confirm every word I have uttered."

But not even this eloquent defense could touch the stony heart of the weakly, proud woman who stood before her. She was destitute of all those fine feelings and sensibilities which thrill in the heart of a truly refined woman, and she could think of nothing but the disgrace which she imagined had been heaped upon her.

"But what could have induced you to come and impose upon me in such a way?" she asked.

"I came," replied Mary, pathetically, "because he asked me to, and because I knew not what else to do. I had been deceived and led into sin and shame—I had for years been upon the brink of starvation, and desired to escape from it, and when the means were offered by a true Christian that

wanted to save me, what could I do but avail myself of them? And since I came here I defy any one to show that I have deviated in the slightest particular from the life he would have had me lead. Is it not so?"

"How do I know what you have done?" said the woman, roughly. "I only know that you have lied to me, and you must leave here this very night."

"But can I not stay till morning?" asked Mary, in a choking voice, for she could not but remember an incident almost identical with this which occurred three years before, and the consequences of which had been so disastrous to her.

"No, you cannot. If you are not out of my house in one hour I will have you put out by the police," replied the woman, rudely, as she banged the door and went down stairs.

"God in heaven, have mercy upon me!" said Mary, as soon as she was alone. "Am I never to escape from the dreadful consequences of my sins? Is there no hope for such as I? Will Christ refuse me?"

And with this piteous wail of an almost breaking heart she set about making her preparations to leave, and in less than the time allowed her by the tyrant cruelty of her late employer she had become a homeless wanderer in the streets of Cincinnati.

But the reader will ask how Mrs. —— became acquainted with her character. The explanation

is simple and easy. Among her guests was a weak-eyed young man of great wealth, but whose brain was as void of ideas as is the exhausted receiver of an air-pump, and whose principal avocation consisted of cultivating a sickly-looking sandy mustache, every hair of which, in spite of pomade, persisted in standing in its own peculiar direction, and searching the city over for the latest style of unmentionables—who gave much more attention to the fit of his coat than he did to the troubles and dangers which were at this time convulsing our unhappy country. His feeble brain gave him just sufficient interest to appreciate Mary's beauty, and he had during the evening made some advances to her which were quietly and in the most lady-like manner rejected. When she withdrew from the room he hastened to Mrs. —— to make inquiries about her. That lady was at the moment in conversation with Tompkins, who as soon as he heard the inquiry, burst into a loud and ill-mannered laugh.

"That," said he, "is a girl that used to live at Pittsburgh with a man by the name of Jones, who passed her off as his wife till he got tired of and left her. I think, my dear Mrs. ——, servants must be very scarce when you have to employ such as she is."

"Are you sure of what you say?" demanded the lady, "because if you are, she leaves this house this very hour. I don't keep that kind of stock about my house."

"Sure of it! of course I am, and if you ask her she won't dare to deny it," said the youug man in the free-and-easy style characteristic of the class to which he belonged. "I knew Mr. Jones when she lived there."

"That is enough for me," said the woman, and leaving the room she ascended to that of Mary to enact the scene we have portrayed; and having thus performed an act of cruelty and hard-heartedness over which angels might weep and demons rejoice; having done what lay in her power to insure the destruction of the poor unfortunate who sought to escape by her own exertions from the cesspool of wretchedness and possible infamy into the higher and purer atmosphere of peace and happiness; having, as she thought, demonstrated her devotion to refinement and good breeding by thrusting back the poor wretch into the world of woe she had just left, she descended to her parlor to chatter silly nonsense with and smile upon the young man who, by his own confession, was an associate of those upon the bare suspicion of being one of whom she had just indulged in such bitter reviling and denunciation of the unfortunate. "Oh! consistency, thou art a jewel." Oh! shame, where is thy blush, when woman in the same moment condemns with scorn and loathing the destroyed of her own sex, and smiles upon and caresses the destroyer. Is this Christ-like?

Turn we again to poor Mary. For a time she stood almost stupefied with horror at her situation.

Again she was alone and friendless in the streets of a large city, an entire stranger, destitute even of a shelter from the storm which was threatening to burst over the earth, and for a brief space she stood undecided what to do. The muttering thunder warned her that delay was dangerous, and leaving her trunk where it was, she set out in search of a stopping-place. She might have gone to a hotel, but this, situated as she was, would have been but to invite suspicion and perhaps subject her to indignities she would gladly avoid, and so, weary and heart-sick she set out in search of some other shelter.

But now all doors seemed shut against her. The mere announcement of her situation was sufficient to cause cold and averted looks, and in one or two instances she was repulsed with bitter and angry words and even threats of being given in charge of the police. At length, wearied out, sick and despairing, and with scarcely a hope of escape from the fate which seemed to beckon her onward to perdition, she turned her halting footsteps in the direction of the river, whose darkly rolling waves would afford her at least that which seemed denied her elsewhere—a shelter from the storm which already began to beat upon her, and an escape from the misery which alone seemed her portion.

But relief was at hand. Passing on her way a comfortable looking cottage, whose every aspect indicated it as the abode of peace and plenty, she

suddenly resolved to make one more effort to escape from the doom impending over her, and mounting the steps she rang the bell. The door was opened by a lady of benevolent aspect, from every feature of whose countenance beamed the holy light of contentment and goodness, such as can only be imparted by the gentle influence of the Son of God upon the human heart.

The moment her eyes fell upon the wet and shivering figure before her, her heart told her that here was a case for the exercise of that benevolence and charity which had been the pole-star of her life, and without a word of inquiry as to who or what she was, she bid Mary enter. Conducting her to the sitting-roon, where blazed a comfortable fire of wood, she bade her be seated, and then waited for her guest to speak. For a short time Mary was silent; a choking sensation at her throat prevented her from speaking, then raising her eyes to the beaming face of her hostess, she said:

"You see before you, madam, a homeless wanderer, who in all this great city has not one single friend and knows not where to go for shelter, and who begs of you a stopping-place till morning."

"No one ever appeals in vain to me for shelter, especially on such a night as this," replied the lady, kindly. "But your clothes are wet—you must allow me to remove these and bring you others, and then you must have a cup of tea. I know from your looks that you are weary, and a

cup of tea will refresh you. Jane," to a domestic who was sewing in one corner of the room, "will you go and make a strong cup of tea for the lady?"

Such unexpected kindness from a total stranger quite overcame poor Mary. Bursting into tears, she said:

"But, madam, you know not to whom you extend so much of kindness."

"I know," replied the woman, "that you are poor and destitute, homeless and hungry, and that the Master has commanded us to minister to the wants and necessities of such. And further than this I ask not."

"But," said Mary, "you must know all, and when you have heard my story, turn me into the street if you will, as so many have done before you. I cannot be the recipient of such unmerited kindness without at least telling you upon whom it is bestowed."

"Well, well," said the good lady, playfully and kindly, "too much talking is not good for one as weary as you are. Wait until you have been refreshed with a cup of Jane's tea, and then if you will you shall tell me your story," and hastening to a closet in one corner of the room she brought dry clothing for which she obliged Mary, in spite of her remonstrances, to change her own wet and soiled garments. By the time her toilet was made, and she had returned to the sitting-room, Jane brought in a very comfortable lunch, to

which she did ample justice, despite the emotion which filled her heart, while her kind hostess sat by and served her with as much apparent zest as though she had been her dearest and most intimate friend. This was Christlike.

When her repast was concluded and Jane took away the tea things, Mary proceeded to tell her story in brief to her kind benefactress, not sparing herself or extenuating faults in the slightest degree. Her hostess listened in silence, only occasionally asking some explanation of matters which she did not fully comprehend. And when her sad, sad story was finished, and Mary had told of her almost despair, her meditated suicide which she was actually on the way to consummate when attracted by the bright light shining from her windows, she gently drew the weeping girl's head upon her bosom, while she murmured:

"Poor child, yours has been a sad lot in life. But I will aid you in your struggle with the world. You shall remain here at least until morning, and then we will see what can be done."

How grandly does the simple Christian benevolence of this woman contrast with the heartless conduct of Mrs. ———! The latter was the slave of pride, avarice and fashion—the other the consistent follower of the Savior of mankind. Say, dear reader, which manifested the most sincere devotion to holiness and virtue—the one who thrust poor Mary out into the street with a Pharisaical, "Stand aside, I am more holy than thou,"

or the other who took her in and said, "Come, I will assist you to regain your lost footing in the world?" Which did most toward accomplishing her reformation? And above all, which was most likely to be commended by the Father?

Dear reader, the author was a witness to this, and was at the house when Mary was brought in and cared for, and has since kept track of her. It is no fiction. I hope every one that reads this story will be an instrument in the hand of God to save some fallen girls.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Mary awoke the next morning she could scarcely realize for a time where she was. The events of the preceding night seemed to her only like some horrible dream, and yet everything seemed so strange to her that she hardly knew what to think. But soon it all occurred clearly to her mind, and she wept tears of joy and thankfulness to "Him who watches the sparrows as they fall." And then she fell into a sort of reverie from which she was soon aroused by a gentle tap at the door, and the next moment her kind hostess entered the room.

Mrs. Weston (for that was her name) kindly inquired how she had rested, and told her that breakfast would soon be ready—then left her to make her toilet, and returned to the kitchen to superintend in person the finishing touches of the morning meal.

The family of this estimable lady consisted of herself, her husband, who was a thrifty retail merchant on Pearl street, two sons, both of whom were doing gallant service in defense of their country, and three girls, the eldest of whom was thirteen years of age. One, a son, was quietly sleeping in a shady nook of the old cemetery, whither his parents with bitter tears, but with hopeful confidence of being reunited with him at

the last day, had laid him four years before. Mary had seen none of the family the evening before, the husband being absent on business, and the children in their beds when she came. And it was with no little trepidation that she descended to the dining-room to meet them for the first time. But Mr. Weston was in spirit the worthy counterpart of his noble wife, and he treated her with such unaffected kindness that she was soon quite at her ease; and her heart, which but a few hours before was almost bursting with its load of anguish, overflowed with thankfulness to the good Being who had guided her wandering footsteps to such a pleasant place.

After breakfast she had a long conversation with Mrs. Weston, the result of which was that she was engaged in her family in the same capacity she had occupied at Mrs. ———'s, as a seamstress and sort of governess for the children. Mrs. Weston had for some time been looking out for some one to fill this station, and Mary's evident refinement and earnest desire to do some good in the world, convinced the good lady that her children would be safe in her charge. And to the credit of all parties be it said that during all the time she was an inmate of the family, Mrs. Weston never had the least occasion to repent her action in this matter.

Eighteen months of peace and comparative happiness now passed over the head of our storm-tossed heroine. In the calm retirement of Mrs.

Weston's home she found shelter from the bitter blasts which had so long assailed her, and but for the memory of the sorrowful past, she would have been perfectly happy. True, it was never alluded to in the most distant manner, but still the memory of it rankled in her breast and caused her many a silent tear of anguish.

Allusion has already been made to her rare beauty, and with the calmness of her present life her loveliness, which had been somewhat impaired by the sorrows she had endured, returned in all its beaming freshness.

Retiring as was her disposition, Mary could not at all times avoid meeting company at Mrs. Weston's, for, though not in the upper ten of fashion, Mrs. Weston had many friends who were attracted to her by her sterling good sense and her well-known purity and kindness of heart. And with the society that frequented her house Mary's intelligence, vivacity and refinement soon made her quite a favorite. She had many invitations to go into society, but she invariably declined them, but with such kindness as, instead of offending, seemed but to endear her still more to those who were thus disappointed.

Among those who most frequented Mrs. Weston's house was a young gentleman whom we will call Gus ———. He was a grocer and produce dealer on Market street, and was well-known as a most promising young man, of a high order of business talent, and of uncompromising honesty.

That he was at times somewhat eccentric, and a little inclined to change his opinions in minor matters upon grounds which a person of cooler and less impulsive temperament would have deemed, perhaps, hardly sufficient, were not deemed sufficient to condemn him with those who knew his native goodness of heart, and the steadfastness with which he had adhered to all the cardinal principles of honesty and morality.

Meeting Mary one evening, a few weeks after she had become a member of Mrs. Weston's family, he was at once deeply impressed by her beauty, and upon a closer acquaintance, her intelligence and good sense completed the conquest which the charms of her person had commenced. From this time he was untiringly assiduous in his efforts to cultivate and improve the acquaintance which chance had thus begun, and though Mary was far from affording him any encouragement in his advances, he still persevered in his pursuit with an energy which knew no such word as failure, and yet with a delicacy which she could not but appreciate and admire, and for which she was truly grateful to him.

Some one has said that "love is born of gratitude," and the constancy and earnestness with which "Gus" pursued his suit could not fail to make some impression upon the heart of Mary, and struggle against it as she might, all too soon came the secret consciousness that her regard for him was not merely that dictated by friendship, but

that a warmer and tenderer emotion mingled with the sentiment with which she greeted him. Mrs. Weston, meantime, had learned to love Mary almost as her own daughter (as in one sense she might almost be considered), and her high estimation of "Gus" led her to regard with the utmost complacency, and, indeed, with a good degree of secret satisfaction, the tenderness which she imagined was growing up between them. Not that she enacted in any sense the part of a match-maker between them; her good sense and sterling worth would not permit this; but feeling as she did the highest regard for both, believing fully and firmly in the sincerity of Mary's repentance and reformation; believing also that their characters were admirably adapted to add to each other's happiness, she was well content to let events take their course, hoping and believing from what she daily witnessed, that the result would in time be all that she could wish.

Mary, meantime, was undergoing a severe struggle between duty and inclination. On the one hand was the blackness of the horrid past, of which she was well aware that "Gus" was ignorant, and of which she felt that duty required her to apprize him in some way, while on the other, in addition to the natural timidity with which she shrank from the dread revelation, was the fear that when her sad story was known to him it would result in driving him in disgust from her side forever—an event which could not fail to

be a still further blighting of her happiness, for, as already intimated, his gentle perseverance and apparent steadfastness of purpose had awakened the tenderer feelings of her heart, and taught her to love him. For a long time she thus hovered between inclination on the one side and what she felt to be duty to him on the other. No word of love had as yet passed his lips, but still his feelings had been manifested in various ways which could not be mistaken, and several times Mary had resolved to tell him all, but as often when the moment of revelation came, she shrank with shame from the painful exposure, and so matters went on.

But a crisis was approaching which would admit of no further postponement. One evening he called while Mrs. Weston was out, and was received by Mary alone in the family sitting-room. It was just at the twilight of a pleasant summer's eve, when all nature is at peace, and when the spirit of mankind is insensibly mellowed and subdued into harmony with its surroundings. It is upon just such occasions that our tenderest emotions and feelings exert their most powerful influence; when stormy and turbulent passions are allayed by the heavenly quiet of the scene, and discord and contention have no abiding place in the human heart. What hour so meet as this for a declaration of love? So "Gus" thought, and when at his entrance Mary arose to light the gas (she had been silently communing with her own

thoughts as the shades of night slowly settled down around her) he stopped her by saying:

"Pray, Miss Bay, do not. Never mind the lights, but sit down and hear what I have to say."

Mary complied with his request, and without a word seated herself trembling upon the sofa, for her heart told her what was coming, and she knew that the exposition she so much desired and yet dreaded to make could no longer be deferred.

Seating himself by her side, he poured forth his tale of love. In words made eloquent by depth and intensity of feeling he told her how he had loved her from the hour of his first introduction to her; how each interview with her had but added to the intensity of the feeling which the first meeting had awakened in his bosom; how fervent his love had become and how true it should prove, and wound up by asking her to become his wife.

And how did poor Mary receive this impassioned harangue? For a single instant the most fiery joy thrilled her heart—then the remembrance of the awful revelation to be made sent the blood curdling back to her heart, and burying her face in her hands, while the hot tears forced themselves through her fingers, she listened in silent agony to his story—that story so oft repeated, and yet ever new, and ever interesting alike to speaker and hearer. But when his tale was finished, and attempting to take her hand, he pressed her for an answer, she raised her tear-wet face to his and said:

"I cannot deceive you. You know not what you ask. But listen to my story—a revelation of sorrow and sin and degradation, of which had you any conception, that to which I have just listened had been left unsaid."

And then she told him all without reserve or concealment. She made no effort to extenuate or conceal any fault upon her own part, but took upon herself the full measure of all the blame which rested upon her, and when she had finished her sad story, she said:

"Now you have the history of my life—go and forget me."

She spoke this in a tone of such hopeless woe, and with such an expression of utter despair upon her countenance as to touch the very bottom of his heart, and passing his arm around her waist he said tenderly:

"Say not so, Mary; bid me not go and forget you, for the last were an impossibility. What have we to do with the past? Let it be forever forgotten. True, it is sad enough, but your candor and frankness in communicating it to me but increase if possible my esteem and affection for you. Let us not look to the past—the present and future are all with which we have to do. Say, Mary, will you be my wife?"

"But," replied Mary, "have you considered well all the consequences of what you ask? You have friends and relations who would, perhaps, and very justly so, consider themselves degraded

to a certain extent by any relation you might assume to me."

"I have considered all I desire to," he replied with some impetuosity. "I repeat, we have nothing to do with the past—the future I am willing to trust with you, and with no one else—my friends will love, respect and esteem you, not only because you are my wife, but because of your own worth. Shall it be so?"

Mary replied not in words—her heart was too full, but she dropped her head upon his shoulder and their lips met in the first warm kiss of love. He was answered. The poor, tired, stormed-tossed spirit had found a haven of rest and peace at last.

When Mrs. Weston returned "Gus" took his leave, and she and Mary now were left alone, the children having already retired. The good lady saw from the flush which rested upon the cheek of her protege, and the unwonted sparkle of her eye, that something more than ordinarily exciting to her had taken place, and she was not at all surprised when Mary gave her an account of the scene which had been enacted in her absence, for her close observation had fully prepared her for it. And to say that she was pleased with the assurance that the hopes she had long indulged regarding the future of the unfortunate girl to whom she had been so true a friend were now about to be realized, would but faintly express her feelings upon the subject. As she expressed it to her husband, "everything had turned out just as she

wished, and she was sure they would be just as happy as they deserved to be, and she could not wish them anything better than that."

As for Mary, she was as happy in her newly formed relations as any one could be expected to be who, after a long course of unmitigated suffering and sorrow, was at last freed from the burden which had so long weighed them down, and emerged into the pure sunlight of happiness and rest. The noble conduct of her betrothed in regard to her past history had touched her heart with a deeper feeling of devotion to him than she had before known, and now she would have died ere she would have done an act or thought a thought which could possibly wound his noble nature. To her the future appeared clad in roseate colors, and she resolutely turned her back upon the bitter past as upon some frightful dream which could mar her happiness no more forever. Poor child! she could not foresee the sorrows which were still in store for her, and were to turn the now bright appearing future into days of sorrow and nights of weeping.

CHAPTER XIV.

But though "Gus" had been thus successfully pressing his suit, the reader must not suppose that he was the only admirer whom the beauty and intelligence of Mary had attracted to her side, and not a few of the young friends of Mrs. Weston had sought to ingratiate themselves in her good graces, but with quiet grace and dignity she repelled them all. There was one among them, however, who, inasmuch as he will be in some degree connected with Mary's future, demands a more particular notice.

Francis Wills was a young physician who, after graduating at one of the best medical institutions of the country, had opened an office, and, ostensibly at least, gone into practice in the town of Kennettsville, in the State of Ohio. But, though well read and of good judgment and discretion, practice came but slowly to the young doctor, and being alone in the world, without means, friends or influence, he was rapidly becoming disheartened and almost ready to abandon his profession in despair, when our mighty civil war broke out and at once absorbed every emotion of all ranks and classes of society. Intelligent, patriotic and unselfish, it was but natural that our young graduate should espouse with all the ardor of his nature the cause of true freedom, good government and law and

order. And in one of the earliest three years regiments from the gallant State of Ohio, he enlisted as a private. In this capacity he served for some time, until the attention of his colonel was attracted by the skillful manner in which he dressed the wound and staunched the otherwise speedily fatal flow of blood from the neck of a comrade, shot down by his side in a brisk skirmish with the enemy. Upon inquiry that officer ascertained his status at home, and as the army was then suffering for want of sufficient medical officers, he procured his appointment as assistant surgeon, with the rank of first lieutenant. In due time he was assigned to the charge of one of the numerous hospitals in Cincinnati, and was occupying that position at the time of his introduction to Mary Bay.

But a short time had elapsed after forming her acquaintance until the young surgeon made her an offer of his hand and heart; but though he urged his suit with all the ardor and impetuosity of his warm nature, his proposals were firmly rejected, but yet with such kindness as, instead of embittering him, to convert him into a devoted friend; and after his rejection he still continued to visit her, though well understanding that her determination was irrevocable and his suit hopeless, while with rare good sense, generosity and manliness, he never alluded to the subject in any manner whatever; and when he learned that "Gus" had been more fortunate than himself, he

was among the first to congratulate his rival upon success, and no one who knew his character for a moment doubted the sincerity and genuineness of his congratulations, however much he might have wished her choice had fallen upon himself instead of another.

But in the mighty web of time figures and scenes are constantly shifting, and now was unrolling for our heroine a dark and gloomy picture—one which was for a time to change entirely the aspect of her life. Her betrothed, though accounted a careful and correct business man, suddenly failed; his property, the reward of all his care and toil, was swept away in an hour as it were; and whereas he had been accounted worth his thousands, he was at once found to be hopelessly bankrupt. The most inconsistent and contradictory rumors as to the cause of failure were at once put in circulation. By some it was attributed to the dishonesty of a defaulting book-keeper; others said it was owing to the capture and destruction by the rebels of a vessel, a large part of whose cargo was consigned to him—while others attributed it to other causes. In one thing, however, all were agreed: that the wreck was complete, and that it was not owing to any fault of his. So convinced were his creditors of his good faith in the matter, that they offered him every possibility to resume business upon the most favorable terms; but to this his proud spirit would not consent. No, he would give up everything to pay his debts; would go to Idaho,

and amid its inexhaustible gold fields, would seek once more to regain the position in the commercial world which he had lost. It was a gigantic undertaking, but he was not the man to shrink from its fulfillment.

The most painful feature of the programme was, that it involved his separation from Mary for a long time; how long the great Disposer of all human events could alone foretell, even if it were permitted them ever to meet again. She was in an agony of tears at the thought of being separated from him under such dread uncertainties, and yet she entered fully into the noble spirit which prompted the dangerous journey, and she strove not to dissuade him from his purpose.

At length his arrangements were fully completed; every dollar of his property had been scrupulously applied to the payment of his debts, and with a light purse but strong arms and stout heart, he joined a small party of emigrants bound for the land of gold, fully determined amid the rock-ribbed fastnesses of its everlasting mountains to hew out a fortune for himself and the loved one he was leaving behind. The parting with his betrothed was a sad and sorrowful one. She clung to him and wept as though her heart would break, while he, strong man though he was, and "unused to the melting mood," felt his own eyes grow moist and dim as he clasped her in his arms and imprinted upon her lips, perchance, the last kiss.

Many were the vows of faith and constancy which in that last hour they exchanged; numerous the promises to write to each other, at least as often as every week; and when the time allowed him before the departure of the train which was to bear him from her side had elapsed, it was still just as hard to part as ever. But the imperious demands of time and fortune admit no delay, and straining her in one last convulsive grasp to his throbbing bosom, he hastened from the house, and in a moment was whirling away to the depot, while poor Mary sought her room and wept as though the last friend she had on earth was taken from her.

And what of Francis Wills during this hour of sadness to the lovers? It cannot be said that he rejoiced at the necessity which demanded their separation, and yet it cannot be denied that there sprang up in his heart a sort of thrill of hope that in some way his suit might be advanced by the absence of "Gus." He kept repeating to himself the hackneyed phrase that "absence conquers love," and patiently waited for this all-potent agent to produce some change in the heart of Mary, when he designed to once more renew his suit for her hand.

But time passed away and no change seemed to have come over the spirit of her dream. For the first few weeks after "Gus's" departure, his letters continued to arrive with the utmost regularity, all breathing the same spirit of true devo-

tion and filled with bright hopes and anticipations of the future; sentiments which found a ready echo in her heart and in the responses which she, from time to time, dispatched to him. And still the patient, devoted surgeon waited, believing that the time would yet come when constancy such as his must meet with its just reward, and his high hopes be crowned with success.

In time the letters from the wanderer grew to be less frequent, and were perceptibly shorter. This was doubtless owing to the lack of facilities for writing and mailing letters; but the intense and earnest love of Mary demanded nothing short of the fullest return, and she refused to admit the mitigating circumstances. There is perhaps no single passion of the human heart so difficult to fully satisfy as earnest, all-absorbing love; none which demands so much from its object, or forgives so little of dereliction. This may seem questionable to my readers, but I believe a little reflection will convince the most skeptical of its truth. True and earnest love induces its possessor to forgive almost anything in its object, so long only as that which requires forgiveness indicates no want of love upon the part of the individual requiring to be forgiven. But let the conduct of that individual be of such a nature as to indicate that the deep, earnest love which has gone out to him has met with no return; let his conduct in short be such as to excite the jealousy of that other, and then acts of themselves totally insignifi-

cant are magnified into events of the mightiest import. It may be said that this is simply jealousy and not love, and to this the obvious and indisputable reply is, that jealousy in the sense in which it is here used, is but one of the natural offshoots of deep, impassioned love.

Time passed, but brought no change to the apparently forsaken Mary. The letters of her betrothed still made their appearance less and less frequently, and finally ceased altogether. In vain she watched the arrival of each successive mail, and earnestly prayed for some communication, if only to tell her she was forgotten or altogether abandoned; but still the silence remained all unbroken, and Mrs. Weston, who was in Mary's confidence, was pained and shocked beyond measure, to mark the inroads which her fearful suspense was making upon her naturally delicate constitution. She smiled but seldom; her eyes were red and swollen as with constant weeping; her face became haggard and her form thin and bent as if with the weight of years. In the few months since his departure an age seemed to have passed over her. At last Mrs. Weston determined to keep silent no longer upon the subject which she well knew was killing Mary, and she thus addressed her:

"Mary, my dear, I have observed your grief for some time, and know that it is killing you by inches. I know too, by my own experience, how much the genuine sympathy of one true friend

will do towards relieving the weight of such a burden as now oppresses your heart. That I am such a friend to you, I know you will do me the justice to believe, and I ask that you let me share your burden, and if possible relieve some portion of its crushing weight."

"That you are my true friend, my more than mother," replied the girl, bursting into tears, "I know full well. Your treatment of me proves it by the most indubitable evidence, but my grief is not to be assuaged by the means you propose. It lies too deep for that."

"But tell me," persisted Mrs. Weston, kindly, "wherein lies the peculiarity of your sorrow. That it grows out of the apparent desertion and faithlessness of 'Gus,' I am well aware, and yet, painful as it is to be thus deserted by one whom we have implicitly trusted, I cannot think that these peculiarities exist any where save in your own imagination. Tell me all, will you not, my dear child?" And as she spoke she passed her arm tenderly around the girl's waist and drew her head upon her bosom.

"It is not so much the probable desertion," replied Mary, "as the horrible uncertainty attending the matter. That it is that is killing me. I know not whether he be living or dead, or if living, what can be the cause of his silence. That he has forgotten our plighted vows I feel fully assured, but have no idea of the cause of his faithlessness. Do you suppose," she continued in a whisper, as

if fearful of the sound of her own voice, "that it can be anything in my past history which has caused the change in his feelings?"

"No, I can hardly think so," replied Mrs. Weston. "He knew it all before he went away, did he not?"

"Yes, I imparted all to him as fully as to you before our engagement was formed, and he declared himself as fully satisfied as did you, my kind benefactress; and now I know not what to think of this apparent duplicity, and this uncertainty is the most painful of all."

"But why do you think he has deserted you? May you not be mistaken in this?"

"I have tried to persuade myself that my suspicions were groundless, until all hope has departed. For some time after he went away, I received letters every week, as you are aware, warm, loving and tender as was his language while here; then a longer time would elapse between the arrival of his missives, while they would be shorter, and a spirit of coolness more easily felt than described seemed to pervade them until at last they ceased altogether, and now it has been months—to me it seems ages—since I have heard a word from him. Oh, if I only knew he was dead I could endure it," and the poor girl shuddered in her strong agony.

Mrs. Weston knew not what to say. She fully appreciated the anguish which convulsed the frame of the fair girl beside her; she felt in her

inmost soul that he whom Mary had learned to love with all the intensity of her nature had proven false and was unworthy of that love, and she was too truthful to delude her with false hopes, or to endeavor to impart comfort and consolation when she felt that none really existed. For a time she sat silent and perplexed, and then she said in a low tone:

"Can you not rise above the bitterness of this disappointment? Forget the false one, and be again your own true and noble self."

"It is easy to say forget, but it is a hard thing to do when one has loved as I love him," replied Mary. "He has become a part of my very life and being; an ingredient of my soul, and to bid me forget him is like bidding me to pluck away a part of my very self. It is in vain to ask it—I cannot do it."

"But it is the only way," persisted her kind friend. "It is not womanly, or just to yourself or your sex thus to pine away for the sake of one who evidently cares nothing for you, and who has proven false to every vow; be true to yourself, if he is not, and cast him out from your very thoughts."

Mary made no reply. She knew that what her friend said was the truth, and that it was due to herself to cast out the image of him who had proven himself so unworthy the love of a true and noble woman, and she inwardly resolved that she would tear his image from her heart, even though

in the effort its every fibre should quiver and snap with the untold anguish, and yet she clung to the hope that he might still be true, and that his silence would at the proper time be explained in such manner as to relieve him from all blame. But at the last came a letter from him which banished all hope, a letter brief and cold, in which he advised her "to forget him; that it would be better for both to do so; that they would both be happier," etc.

Words can hardly depict the anguish of our heroine, as she read this cold and heartless epistle, and with it the assurance that for a second time the wealth of the affections of her heart had been squandered upon an unworthy object. For a time she sat stunned and bewildered by the fatal discovery—fatal at once to all her love of him—of the falsity of him whom she had considered the very embodiment of truth and nobleness. For a time her brain whirled, and it was only by the exercise of all the strength and force of character she could summon that she kept herself from fainting. Then her womanly pride and fortitude came to her aid, and though fearful was the struggle, she conquered and arose in her might, determined that from that hour he should be as nothing to her. Many and bitter were the tears she shed ere the sacrifice of her idol was fully completed, but at last she triumphed and came forth from the strife, somewhat scathed it is true, but with her spiritual strength renewed, and confirmed in her devotion to the right.

CHAPTER XV.

MARY had conquered her love for "Gus," but the struggle had left her but a shadow of her former self. Within the family circle of the Westons she was measurably unchanged; she still displayed toward each member of the family the same degree of kindness and affection which she had ever manifested, and which had been called into being by the assistance they had rendered her, but to the world at large her whole demeanor was changed. She was no longer interested or attracted by the pleasures of society or the delights of social intercourse; she took the same part in such things that she had ever done, but it was without any heart; she moved amongst her associates like an icicle, a being without a heart and without the least sympathy with anything around her, and upon her countenance was ever present an expression of weariness which told of the desolation within. She had answered in fitting terms the cold and cruel letter in which her lover had announced his change of purpose, and with the mailing of that letter she felt that she had severed every tie which bound her to happiness in the past.

And when, a short time after this event, Dr. Wills again made her an offer of his hand and heart, he met with no refusal. She professed no

love for him, or indulged in no extraordinary display of emotion or sentiment—cold and impassive as a statue, she listened to the repetition of his tale of love, and at its close gave him a hand which chilled him with its icy, frigid coldness, and took upon herself the vows which were to make her his forever. And he, feeling keenly the assurance that in her heart abode no love for him, accepted the sacrifice, fondly trusting to his own great love for her, and to the effect of the most unwearied kindness to awaken within her breast that sentiment without which no woman should ever give her hand in marriage.

Upon one point, however, she was immovable, and that was as to a postponement of the marriage for a time. Wills, now that he had obtained the promise for which he had so long sued in vain, was exceedingly anxious that the wedding should take place at once, and used all the powers of his persuasive eloquence to win her consent, but in vain. Two months was the shortest period of probation to which she would consent, and with this he was forced to be satisfied.

Mary had a secret motive for insisting upon this delay. Notwithstanding the fact that she had, as she fancied, driven the image of "Gus" entirely from her heart, there still lingered within her breast a latent hope that when he should receive and read her farewell letter, the old love for her would be awakened in his heart and that their former relations might be restored. And this it

was, although she was herself unaware of the fact perhaps, which induced her to claim the delay. Two months would afford ample time for her letter to reach him and be answered, and if at the end of that time she did not hear from him, the last lingering ray of hope would expire, and then she would care very little what became of her.

What a strange medley of contradiction is the human heart! Had any one told Mary that she still loved this man, the one who had so cruelly betrayed her trust, she would have repelled the assertion with indignant scorn, and would have actually thought her indignant denial was true, and yet she was steadfastly insisting upon postponing the consummation of her marriage contract solely in obedience to the dictates of that love which she imagined entirely eradicated; and in this she was only obeying the common impulses of our nature. Who is there that, having witnessed the demolition and disappointment of some long-cherished hope, has not said, time and again, "I don't care anything about it," while the frequent repetition of this hackneyed phrase, but affords the strongest possible evidence of its falsity, and that the speaker does really care?

But time passed, and still no word came to assure her that he desired to recall those unkind words, and at last arrived the day fixed for the wedding, and with heavy heart and bloodless, quivering lips, whose pallor vied with the hue of the bridal veil she wore, and with a hand whose

deathly coldness thrilled through the frame of the bridegroom as it rested on his arm, she stood up before the man of God and spoke the vows which bound her to Francis Wills so long as they both should live, while deep within her inmost heart she registered a solemn promise that those faintly spoken vows should be redeemed so far as in her lay. And thus the breach between herself and "Gus" was completed and rendered impassable.

It had been arranged that they should board, for some time at least, at Mrs. Weston's, and thither they went immediately upon leaving the church. That lady had invited a few of the most intimate friends of the family to meet and spend the evening with them, and in this quiet and unostentatious manner Mary buried the last of the hopes by which, during the last year, she had been cheered and gladdened while contemplating her somewhat eventful career.

But a short time elapsed after her marriage until Mary was somewhat surprised by her husband saying to her one evening:

"I am sorry to interfere with the pleasure you seem to enjoy with these excellent friends, but fear I shall be compelled to do so."

"What do you mean?" she asked, for the idea of leaving the home which had so long sheltered her was anything but pleasant.

"Simply this: To-day I received an order from the surgeon general of the army, directing us to report immediately for duty at Indianapolis," he

replied. "I am making an effort to have the order rescinded and some one else detailed in my place, but really entertain very little hope of success."

"If it must be, it must," said Mary, quietly. "I shall very much regret leaving here and going among strangers, but wherever you are ordered, there is my place. So if we have to go, let us make the best of it."

"Thank you for the spirit you manifest," he replied. "I am free to confess that I was very much opposed to going, and that my greatest objection was that it would be unpleasant for you."

"Of course I would much rather stay here," replied Mary, "but if we cannot, you shall never hear one word of complaint from me."

The next morning at breakfast the tidings were communicated to the family, and produced no little consternation, especially among the younger members. Mary had been so long their guardian and instructor that they had come to look upon her as really belonging to them, and with one accord they entered their protest against her being taken away.

Protest and remonstrance, however, generally avail nothing in conflict with "military necessity," and so it was in the present instance. Iu due time the communication which Wills had forwarded to headquarters was returned, "through the regular channels," endorsed, "The request contained in this paper cannot be granted, owing to the exigences of the service. Assistant Surgeon

Wills will proceed without delay to Indianapolis and report for duty to Surgeon ———, in charge. By order," etc.

Of course further delay was out of the question, and the next day after the receipt of this communication, Dr. Wills proceeded to Indianapolis, Mary remaining at Mrs. Weston's until he could make arrangements for a suitable boarding-place for her, when she was to come on and join him. It was nearly a week before he succeeded in making arrangements to suit him, his time being so constantly occupied with assuming the duties of his new position and getting accustomed to the routine of business.

But when he had been absent about a week the mail brought her a letter informing her that he had secured good board and comfortable rooms at the house of J. P. Aston, and asking her to come on at once, as he was very lonely without her. The letter was full of such expressions of tender and devoted affection as brought tears to the eyes of Mary, as she reflected how poor was the return she could make for the love which he showered in such profusion upon her. She could be to him a true and faithful wife, and God helping her, this she would be. The next day she went to Indianapolis and was met at the depot by her husband, who took her at once to Mr. Aston's and formally presented her to the family.

She found that every arrangement had been made for the promotion of her comfort, of which

circumstances would possibly admit. Her rooms were the best in the house, and were furnished in the most comfortable and even elegant style, while her table was covered with useful and entertaining books, music, and the like, while in one corner stood a new and splendid guitar to replace the inferior one which had been her companion for so many years.

Again she was moved to tears of gratitude at these evidences of affectionate concern.

The young husband stood silent while she examined the room, and with pride and pleasure beheld the swelling emotion which told how fully she appreciated his efforts to promote her comfort and happiness. At last he spoke:

"How do you like your new home?"

"I cannot tell how much I thank you for your thoughtful kindness," she replied, with deep and earnest emotion. "Everything is just as I would have it—just what I might have expected from you, and that is the very highest commendation I can bestow."

"Then my wife is pleased," he said, coming close up to her and passing his arm around her waist.

"Yes, Francis, I am pleased," she returned, "and cannot find a stronger word to express my satisfaction."

The young husband was gratified with her commendation. There was gratification, obedience, and duty there. But he wanted more words of

praise for his work, and with the great hunger which consumed his soul he half turned away to hide the agony which he felt was showing itself in every lineament of his countenance. "Never mind," he said to himself, "it will come in time. It will be impossible for her always to hold out against the treatment she shall receive at my hands," and with this noble resolve he turned again to his bride.

Mary marked his emotion and correctly defined its cause. She wished she could love him as she knew he deserved to be loved.

In this home they found all the peace and happiness which might be expected to flow from the most devoted love, but it was to last but a short season. The dark angel, sworn foe of the human race, was already pluming his way to bear Francis Wills over the gloomy river into the dark and doubtful regions of the future, thus leaving Mary once more alone and friendless, with no reliance for succor save upon the outstretched arm of Him who has said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavily laden, and I will give you rest."

They had been inmates of Mr. Aston's house but a few weeks when the doctor came home one evening with a flushed face and trembling limbs, which told all too plainly of the fatal fever which had seized upon his frame, already weakened and reduced by the incessant toil which his position required at his hands. He retired to rest after taking some simple remedies, but long before the

next morning, instead of being, as he had lightly expressed it, "well enough," he was raving with delirium, as his vitals were gradually consumed by the fell disease which had fastened upon them.

Mary now had abundant opportunity for the display of her idea of a wife's duty, and never did the most devoted and loving spouse more faithfully watch over the loved one, than did she over her husband during the fearful days and nights of suffering which followed. It mattered not at what hour of the day or night he pronounced her name or called for anything—in an instant she was at his side, and during all the time of his illness no hand save hers administered to him either medicine or refreshment. She slept at times, it is true, but always in a chair by his bedside, and the least exclamation on his part was always sufficient to call her to him with all her faculties about her, ready to do anything to relieve his distress or soothe his delirium.

But neither her devoted care nor the skill and ability of the surgeon who attended him could avail to stay the onward march of the destroyer. The fiat had gone forth from the Omnipotent; his name was already inscribed upon the roll of Death's victims, and like a hungry wolf the grim tyrant was already clamoring for his prey.

On the tenth night of his illness, Mary, worn out by the constant toil demanded of her by her self-imposed task, was dozing in her chair by his bedside. He had been unusually quiet for some

time, but suddenly spoke in tones whose faintness would have rendered them inaudible to any one whose watchfulness was less acute than hers.

"Mary," said he, and in an instant she was at his side, "I have been ill a long time, have I not, and been a great deal of trouble, I fear."

"Yes, Francis," said she, taking his hand, so cold that she shuddered at the contact, "you have been very sick, but thank Heaven you are better now."

"Not so; I am not better, but soon shall be," replied the dying man. "Mary, I am dying. Already I feel his cold fingers clasping my vitals. I shall not live to behold the dawning of another day."

"Oh! Francis, say not so. You must live and recover your health," replied his wife with emotion.

"It is vain to attempt to deceive ourselves," said he. "I am passing away. My time is come, and what can avail to stay his hand? Nay," said he, detaining her as she made a motion as if to summon some one of the attendants from the adjoining room, "do not leave me, or call any one else. I would be alone with you."

He paused a moment as if to recover his wasted strength, and then continued:

"But for the thought that I must leave you alone and unprotected, I should die contented and happy. And there is another thing," he continued, hesi-

tatingly, as if uncertain whether to free his mind or not.

"What is it, my husband? speak freely," she said, weeping.

"I wanted to live to teach you to love me. Oh! Mary," he continued, with sudden energy, "you never can and never will know how I have loved you and how I longed to have my love returned. I knew you did not love me, but I married you, fondly hoping that I might one day win your affection. And could I but have heard from your lips—not that I have a word of complaint to make; you have been to me all that a wife could be—but could I have heard from your lips one single word of love, I could have died happy."

"Then listen," said the weeping wife, her heart deeply touched by his emotion, "I have learned your lesson. I do love you in sincerity and truth," and as she spoke she clasped him in her arms and pressed kisses without number upon his clammy lips.

"What do you say?" said he, entwining his arms about her form, "let me hear those blessed words again. They are sweeter than heavenly music to my ears."

"I love you sincerely and truly," she repeated, again covering his pallid lips and brow with her warm kisses.

"Oh! my God, I thank thee. I can now die happy," he exclaimed in tones of triumph, and in a moment more his spirit had passed to the bosom of his Father.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARY mourned for her husband with sincere sorrow, whom she had loved as a wife should love her husband, one who had been a true friend to her, and who had done all that lay within his power to lighten the heavy burden of sorrow which had been laid upon her—a burden whose grievous weight is seldom borne by one so young as she still was; and the tears which she shed over his grave were but the justly merited tribute to the goodness and kindness with which he had treated her.

The funeral was over and she was again alone in the world. She would have returned to Mrs. Weston's, but that lady, too, had fallen a victim to disease and death; her family was broken up and scattered, and there was no longer a home for her there. With what fearful rapidity had events of the last importance to her transpired within the few weeks since her marriage.

But something she must do. She could not live in idleness, but just what to do she did not know. She did not feel the least inclination to return to the life of a seamstress or a teacher, and yet for what else was she fitted?

After much anxious thought, she decided to learn the art of photography, and after several unsuccessful attempts she succeeded in procuring

employment in the gallery of one of the first artists in the city. Her salary for the first year was but barely sufficient to support her, but her husband left her in possession of a small sum of money, and with this, in addition to what she would receive for her services in the gallery, she felt sure she would get along very comfortably. As the reader is already aware, she possessed the intelligence and correct taste which alone could insure success in her chosen association, and she had no doubt of her ability, with the experience of a year, to command wages which would render her independent.

We said she was alone in the world, but this statement must not be accepted without some qualification. True, she had no one to whom she could turn for any assistance and feel that she had claims which would prevent her suit from being rejected, but still was not without an intimate friend and associate in the person of the daughter of Mr. Aston, who was just about her own age. And inasmuch as she will be in the future somewhat connected with our tale, we beg the indulgence of the reader while we briefly recount her history as related by herself to Mary.

Eva Earl was Mr. Aston's only daughter, and had been left an orphan at the age of eleven years by the death of her mother. This calamity occurring just at the time she most needed judicious and watchful care and training, would have proved most disastrous to any one in whose mind the fun-

damental principles of right and wrong had been less firmly established than in hers, even at that early age, for Mr. Aston's time was almost totally occupied by the heavy business in which he was engaged, and from the time of his wife's death the care and education of his children were of necessity confided almost entirely to the hireling hands of those who really felt no interest in their charge, and whose principal aim was to get off just as cheaply as possible from the demands of duty. But Eva's mother had been a woman of rare good sense, intelligence and discretion, and the pains she had taken in the formation of her daughter's mind had already better fitted her to act the part of a true woman than many persons of twice her years.

And never was there greater need of such careful training, for upon the youthful shoulders of Eva Aston was thrown the burden of the principal care of two brothers, aged respectively nine and seven years. And cheerfully, and with the most wonderful discretion in one so young, was the burden sustained. True, she was not the head of the household. Mr. Aston had a housekeeper, but she was one of those peculiar creatures who, without a drop of the milk of human kindness in their composition, are unable to enter into or comprehend the feelings, wishes, hopes and fears of childhood, and who feel that their duty to children is fully discharged when they are provided with something to eat, drink and wear, never once reflecting that

other matters of far greater importance than these, essential as they are, demand attention in order to fit the child to act properly its part upon the stage of existence. And with these views of her duty to the little ones ostensibly in her charge, and a naturally hard and imperious disposition, it is not to be wondered at that so far as she controlled them their little joys should be few, while their spirits were chilled by contact with her unfeeling nature.

And it was to Eva alone that Sidney and Willie (for those were the names of her brothers) could look for sympathy, for instruction, or even for consolation under the too frequeut injustice and oppression of the housekeeper. And nobly did she perform the duty thus thrust upon her. Under her care and tuition they became boys, such as any father might be proud to call his own; intelligent almost beyond their years, studious, and with the most correct principles and habits fully impressed upon their minds. Many a mother who prides herself upon her government of her children would take lessons with profit from this child of but eleven years of age.

Thus matters went on for three years, and Eva had attained the age of fourteen. An event which transpired at this time, but which it is not necessary to relate here, opened Mr. Aston's eyes to the true state of affairs, and the result was the discharge of the unfaithful housekeeper, and the formal installation of Eva in the position she had

long practically filled, that of head of the family. She was not, of course, expected to do the work of the household; that was far beyond her strength and was performed by hired servants, but she became the absolute mistress and overseer.

But this elevation to place and power did not affect the well poised mind of the young housekeeper. She remained the same kind, judicious and discreet ruler she had been before, and controlled her dominion entirely by the force of love instead of the arbitrary rod of despotic power. And under her administration the condition of the household, and especially of the two boys, was soon very materially improved. It was no small task for a girl of fourteen thus to become the head of a family, and her feelings and resources were often taxed to their utmost limit to properly discharge the duties of her trying and responsible position.

But a still heavier task was awaiting her. Her brother Willie, her pet and favorite, was stricken down with fever. He was a child of very large brain, and of fine, nervous temperament, and to his brain the fever was attracted. For days she watched beside him almost constantly, doing all that the most devoted love, directed by the skill of an experienced nurse, could suggest to calm his delirium and assuage the pains which racked his frame—for he would scarcely permit any one but her to do anything for him—but all was in vain. In vain she invoked Him in whose hands are the

issues of life and death to spare her brother to her—in a few days, but little more than a week from the time he was first attacked, the angels bore him on bright wings to another and happier world. Eva mourned her brother with sincere affection, and then all the love which had been the portion of the two brothers seemed concentrated upon Sidney.

When he reached the age of sixteen he was sent away to college, but not until he had seen his sister given away in marriage.

Some time before this Eva had formed the acquaintance of a young lawyer by the name of Edward Earl. He was a young man of showy exterior and of undoubted talent, and had already attained a very flattering position in the practice of his profession. He had been introduced to Eva at a social party given by one of her friends, and they had seemed from the first to be mutually attracted to each other by the grace and intelligence which each undoubtedly possessed. He had followed up this first acquaintance by an early call in which first impression were but confirmed, and in a short time she came to expect and watch for his coming with the ill-concealed impatience with which a maiden is wont to anticipate the visit of her favored lover.

But though Eva was so much fascinated by the young and interesting attorney, Mr. Aston viewed the growing intimacy between them with anything but pleasurable emotions. He had no well-

founded or tangible objection to Mr. Earl—nothing had ever been urged against his character in the community in which he lived—and yet Mr. Aston fancied that at times he detected in his conversation the faintest possible indication of a laxity of principle which made him fearful of trusting the happiness of his child in his care, and caused him to view with some alarm the influence he was gaining over her mind. But the closest watching failed, as before stated, to discover any ground upon which to predicate any charges against him, and when, after a courtship of some months, the lovers went hand in hand to Mr. Aston to ask his blessing upon their union, he, feeling that his prejudices against Mr. Earl were perhaps unfounded, having the most unlimited confidence in his daughter's judgment, and considering that her happiness was at stake, yielded a reluctant consent to their marriage, only stipulating that the ceremony should be deferred until she had passed her eighteenth birthday. To this the ardent lover was obliged, though unwillingly, to accede, and when the day arrived, the wedding was celebrated according to the forms of the Christian Church, in the presence of a few of the most intimate friends of both parties, soon after which they went to housekeeping in a pleasant little cottage on Illinois street.

Mr. Aston had, meantime, employed a highly-respectable widow lady, by the name of Mrs. Logan, as a housekeeper, and but barely two

months had elapsed from the time of Eva's marriage until Mrs. Logan became the wife of Mr. Aston—a marriage which, to my certain knowledge, neither of them ever for one single moment regretted. Their lives since the union of their fortunes and their interests have been one constant scene of peace and happiness.

Poor Eva, however, was less fortunate in her selection of a companion for life than was her father. Scarcely had the honeymoon of her wedded life waxed and waned until she found that he whom she had made her idol, and whom her fond heart had pictured as a model of human excellence, was totally unworthy of the great love she had bestowed upon him. Instead of his being the man of high-toned principle and moral rectitude and unselfish nobleness of soul which her fancy had painted him, she found that she had married a soulless and unprincipled libertine; a man actuated by none but the most selfish motives, whose only care was the gratification of his own desires, no matter at what expense of sorrow or suffering to any one else. He became a drunkard.

How did the heart of the loving wife sink within her as she thus beheld the veil rudely torn from the face of her idol, and saw the hideous deformity of character which the mask had concealed only so long as was necessary to accomplish his purpose! How she wished, but in vain, that she had heeded the warnings and remonstrances of her father! But it was now too late, and with the

firmness of a proud woman she looked the evil in the face, and resolved to meet her fate without flinching and without complaining. Oh! no; the world, and least of all her father, should never know how much she suffered and how deeply she regretted her ill-advised marriage. But there were times when, in the solitude of her chamber, at the lonely hour of midnight, while her husband perchance was engaged in some wild debauch or bacchanalian revel, it seemed to her that her sorrows were more than she could endure, and but for her fear of offending Him who gave her being, and who has forbidden us to lay down our lives save according to His will, she would have prayed for rest—the calm rest of the grave.

Still she went on hoping against hope, and when she felt in her inmost soul the joy of a new life springing into existence, she fondly believed that the coming stranger would prove the messenger sent from on high to reclaim him from the error of his ways. But all too soon this last hope was destined to be disappointed, as so many had been before. He daily grew more and more cold, neglectful and distant, and finally, without a word of explanation, left his home, merely telling her he was going away on business, and for the long space of four weary months—months of pain and anguish insupportable—she neither saw nor heard anything of him.

When he at last returned, she timidly, but with all the pride of a young mother in her first-born,

brought forward a sweet little boy of three months and laid it in his arms, simply saying, "He is ours, and his name is Edward," and stepped back to watch the effect upon him of this simple appeal. But, oh! how cruelly were the hopes which her fond fancy had conjured up dashed to the ground! A moment he gazed coldly upon the little dimpled face upturned to his, and then merely saying, "A very pretty baby—now take him away, for I never did love children," he handed him back without even so much as a kiss, or the most distant manifestation of parental affection. Eva's beautiful eyes filled with tears as she took the babe and turned away, and from that moment all hope of the reformation of her husband died out within her bosom.

About a week he remained at home, and then went away much in the same manner as before, and from that time to the present she had never heard of him. For some time, however, she continued to occupy the house in which he had left her, and by sewing and such other work as she could get to do, endeavored to support herself and her infant child.

Who can tell the wretchedness that poor, miserable, deserted creature endured for the next few months? What language can depict the misery which falls to the lot of a woman, deserted as she was by him who had sworn to love, honor and protect her? It is not alone the physical suffering—the actual hunger and cold; the constant, unre-

mitting toil, the head throbbing as though it would burst; the wearied, aching limbs, whose every twinge demands in thunder tones the rest which stern necessity forbids; the eyes heavy with loss of sleep, and swollen and inflamed with constant weeping; it is not these alone, terrible though they are, which make up the burden of her wretchedness. Oh! no, there is more refined and keener torture than any or all of these. It is when the world has become stilled around her, and when alone with her loneliness she pursues her ill-requited toil as the hands of her clock point to the midnight hour; when memory sets before her the recollection of anticipated joys and hopes forever blighted; when the dread uncertainty surrounding the future, whose dim and misty outlines seem full of gloomy portent; when imagination conjures up all the horrid images which her loneliness and the weird stillness around her can suggest, then it is that her brain reels with the agony and intensity of its suffering, and the most exquisite torture of her situation is forced upon her.

To Eva's nature, delicate by birth and refined by education, the misery of such a life was almost insupportable, and to that misery was superadded the self-imposed burden of concealment. For though long since convinced that she was forever abandoned by him to whom she had intrusted her all, even her very life, her pride would not permit her to reveal her misery to her father and

ask his aid in escaping from it. Besides, there was the ever present, lingering, illusive hope that her husband would one day return, and then, not for worlds would she have had her father know what she had endured. True, she could not conceal from him the fact of her husband's absence, but she was always excused it on the plea of business, and still struggled on, vainly hoping against hope, that something would occur to afford her relief.

But the time was coming when concealment was no longer possible. Her constant, unremitting toil and loss of rest told fearfully upon her, while the want of sufficient and nourishing food completed her prostration, and she was compelled to abstain entirely from work. Her father visiting her one day, entered the house without knocking as was his wont, and made his way without warning to her little sitting-room. She was lying upon a lounge, from which she attempted to rise as he entered the room, but fell back from mere weakness and exhaustion. Drawing a chair to her side, he folded her in his arms, and said :

"My dear daughter, what does this all mean? Are you sick?"

The poor girl was overcome by weakness, and the pent-up emotions of her heart poured out in a violent flood of tears. Mr. Aston made no effort to check her tears, for he had long suspected that she was concealing something from him, and now that the fountains of her heart were broken up, he

felt sure that everything would be fully explained and he could afford to wait patiently. And he had not long to wait. Soon the violence of her emotion exhausted itself, and then, with her face hidden on his bosom, she replied in a low voice:

"Yes, father, I am sick in body and mind."

"Where is Edward?" he demanded.

"I know not. I have not heard from him for months, not once since he went away," she replied, while her tears flowed afresh.

"What! not heard from him since he went away, so many months ago!" exclaimed her father in unfeigned astonishment, for he had never once suspected that the evil which he was convinced existed in the family was as great as her present revelation seemed to indicate.

"No, dear father, I have not."

"But have you no idea where he is?"

"Not the least. When he went away he did not say where he was going, or how long he would be absent. He merely said business called him away, and I feared to ask any explanations," she said timidly, and with a heavy sigh.

"You feared to ask him any explanations! What do you mean by that? Had he abused you until you were afraid to ask him even so simple a question as where he was going?" he demanded in tones whose ringing sound indicated the choler rising within.

"No, father, I did not mean exactly that," she replied deprecatingly, for she dreaded her father's

wrath being excited against her worthless and unprincipled husband, "but he was always so reserved about his business."

"So reserved about his business that his wife dare not even ask where he is going, or how long he will be away. And I suppose it is the same reserve which keeps him from writing to you or doing anything for you for months, while you are here starving to death," he said, sarcastically. "Come, Eva, that will not do."

"Well, I meant to say that he was so cold and distant during the time he was at home that I did not feel free to say anything to him about such matters," said she in a low voice, "he was drinking so much."

"Yes," said he, in a voice whose vehemence betrayed the anger which burned in his bosom, "I understand it all, now. The villain, after winning you away from happiness and home, has basely deserted you, most likely for some new attraction. And you have kept it all to yourself. Why have you not told me this before?" he demanded almost fiercely.

Eva was frightened at his violence. Her father was habitually a man of calm and unmoved exterior, and she did not remember ever to have seen him so much excited before. And for a moment she made no reply, but when he again demanded to know why she had not told him this before, she found strength and courage to reply:

"Because I thought he would be back, and I

still cannot believe that he intended to abandon me;" her woman's heart clinging with true feminine devotion to the object around which the tendrils of its affection had been entwined, even though convinced, as she was, of the utter unworthiness of that object.

"Intend to abandon you! of course he did. You will never see him again in this world," replied the father. "But he shall not escape the just punishment of his villainy. I will follow him to the ends of the earth to mete out to him the chastisement he deserves."

"Oh! no, dear father," said Eva, earnestly; "although he has wronged me, I forgive him, and you must do the same. It would kill me to know of your harming one hair of his head. No matter what evil he has done to me, he is the father of my boy, and for his sake I forgive all. Oh! promise me," she continued, imploringly, "that you will take no steps to inflict vengeance upon him. Promise for my sake and that of my little boy, who is at least innocent of any wrong."

"But the scoundrel deserves punishment, and he ought to receive it," said the father, hesitatingly.

"That may be," replied Eva, "but surely, if I can forgive him, you ought. His crime was against me, and if I choose to forget the wrong, why should you not? Promise me, my dear father, that you will make no effort to avenge what you may suppose to be my wrongs. Promise me,

will you not?" and she looked up in his face with such a piteous, pleading expression that he was no longer able to resist.

The spectacle of this woman, who had endured some of the most cruel wrongs which man is capable of inflicting or woman of suffering, thus nobly forgiving him by whose hands they had been inflicted, and not only forgiving but doing her utmost to shield him from justly merited punishment, illustrates the character of a true woman's love, and finds no counterpart save in the divine love which prompted the Son of God to come down to earth and suffer and die that he might redeem from deserved punishment those who had offended against the majesty of His Father's law.

For a time Mr. Aston was undecided what to say or do. Certainly his inclination was strong to inflict upon his recreant son-in-law the just recompense of his crimes, and he could not resist Eva's pleading looks and words. After hesitating for a time he said:

"It shall be as you say, my daughter. I will promise to make no effort to chastise him as he deserves, provided you at once and forever abandon him, and make no effort to hold any intercourse with him on any account. You shall leave this house and return home with me, and so long as he stays away and makes no claim to control you or your child in any way, so long he is safe. But if he comes near you, let him beware."

Eva made no reply. She felt that she had

achieved a victory, and that it was best to say nothing more. She justly reflected that perhaps no circumstances would ever arise which would render it necessary for her to interfere farther in shielding her husband from the wrath of her father, and should it become necessary, it would be time enough to act when the emergency arose.

Her father called a carriage, assisted herself and her child into it, and took a seat by her side, and in a few moments she had again arrived at the home of her childhood, the only place where she had ever known any real, lasting happiness. She was welcomed by Mrs. Aston with as much kindness as she could have been had she been her own child, and her indignation at the treatment Eva had received was only equaled by that of her husband. From this time Eva and her boy found a home with Mr. Aston, and at the time Mary became an inmate of the house little Eddie had grown to the age of seventeen months.

He was a bright-eyed, prattling little fellow, just beginning to talk, and Mary thought he was the most interesting child she had ever seen, and it was her attention to him which first laid the foundation of that friendship between herself and his mother which soon became an indissoluble tie, binding them together more strongly than bands of iron.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARY had been some time at Mr. Aston's before she became intimate with Eva, as mentioned at the close of the last chapter. Within a day or two after she came on to Indianapolis to join her husband, as the reader is already aware, and when she had but barely been introduced to Mrs. Earl, the latter left home for a visit of some weeks' duration to some friends in New York. It was not until after the death of Dr. Wills that she returned, and then was just when Mary was most accessible to the claims and demands of a heart yearning for companionship.

One day Mary was passing through the hall up to her room. Little Eddie had wandered into the hall, and as she came along he tried to say something to her in his childish way. His innocent prattle touched her heart, and stooping down she caught him up in her arms, and fled upstairs with him as though she were committing some crime and feared detection. An hour later the house was in commotion. Eddie was missing, and as no one had seen Mary carry him off, all sorts of conjecture as to what had become of him were at once afloat. The house was searched from cellar to garret without result, and serious fears were beginning to be felt, when suddenly Eva burst into

Mary's room without even the ceremony of knocking.

"Oh! Mrs. Wills," she began, in an excited tone, "have you seen"—and then she suddenly stopped, for there was the object of her anxious search snugly curled up on Mary's bed and fast asleep.

"Dear little fellow," said she, approaching the bed. "How terrified we all were. We thought he was lost. How came he here?"

"I picked him up in the hall," said Mary, "and brought him up here, and after playing with him for awhile he got sleepy and I put him to bed. I had no thought of causing any uneasiness or alarm, and am very sorry I have done so. But pray," she continued, restraining Eva, who was about to waken him, "do not disturb him. Sit with me until he finishes his nap, and then you can take him away if you wish."

"Perhaps I had better not disturb him," said Eva, "so I will just step down and tell them the lost is found, and then I will return and stay till he wakens."

"Thank you," was the response, and the young mother tripped down the stairs to relieve the anxiety pervading the entire household on his account.

This was the commencement of their intimacy, and as the lives of both, though brief, had been clouded all over with sorrow, albeit there was not much similarity between the trials they had been called to endure, they very soon became intimate

and confidential friends and associates. The burdens which each was bearing created a bond of sympathy between them, and whenever Mary was at home from the gallery where she was employed, she and Eva were sure to be found in close companionship, either reading some favorite author, engaged in interesting conversation, or strolling pensively and silently about the well arranged grounds pertaining to Mr. Aston's residence.

One evening they were in the garden together—it was late in the fall, but the weather was still pleasant—and were silently walking up and down one of the broad gravel walks. Suddenly Mary stopped and faced her friend:

"Do you know," said she, "that I have some time been thinking of doing what you will no doubt call a very foolish thing?"

"No, indeed," replied Eva, with pretended astonishment, "I have never imagined that my friend could think of, much less do, a foolish thing. Pray, what is it? Tell me and perhaps I may not think it so foolish after all."

"Let us go in here and sit down," said Mary, taking her friend by the arm and leading her toward an arbor, "and I will tell you all about it."

They entered the arbor and sat down, and for a few moments neither one spoke.

"Come," said Eva at last, after waiting some time for her friend in vain, "what is this very foolish thing? I am dying with impatience to

hear it," but certainly the laugh with which the words were accompanied contained no very strong indication of immediate dissolution.

Thus urged, Mary began, though after entering the arbor she wished she had not said anything about it.

"I have often spoken to you of my friend in Idaho," said she. "It has been months since I have heard anything of him, and I know not whether he is living or dead. The holidays will soon be here. I have been thinking of sending him some little token which, if he be living, shall recall me to his memory; a book or two, or something of that sort. And yet it seems to me that after what has passed between us it would be rather unladylike. What do you think of it?"

Eva did not answer immediately. She sat with her eyes cast upon the ground, apparently in deep thought. At last she spoke:

"My dear Mary, answer me two or three questions. Do you still love this man, and would you wed with him if he were to return and ask you to do so?"

"From you I will conceal nothing," replied Mary, in a low tone, while a crimson flush overspread her face and neck. "I do love him, and I suppose I always shall while life and reason are left to me. And were he to ask me to-morrow to marry him, despite his seeming desertion, I should answer 'yes' without hesitation. I know all you would say: that it is unnatural, unwomanly, and

all that sort of thing, but still I cannot help it. Further, I cannot but believe that his seeming desertion is susceptible of some explanation which will remove the sting from it, and render apparent what I have for some time believed—that I was too hasty and that my marriage with Dr. Wills was all wrong. I did not love him."

"Then you never loved Dr. Wills?"

"Yes, and he very well understood it, at least," she added, hesitatingly, as the remembrance of the death-bed scene rose up before her, "until the moment of his death. I was a true wife; we were happy."

"Poor Mary, how much more sorrowful your life has been than my own," said Eva, tenderly passing her arm around her waist. "But what assurance have you of his loving you at the present, or of his ever having done so?"

"None, save my faith in the promises and protestations which he made before going away," replied Mary. "It did not seem to me then that all his vows, made with so much apparent earnestness, could be the false and unmeaning sounds they have since appeared to be, and I cannot now think that he is false. There must be some terrible misunderstanding about the matter, I am sure. And oh! how dreadful to me may be that misunderstanding if not properly cleared up. Still, what can a lady under such circumstances do?" and she shuddered with the intensity of the emotion thronging her soul.

"But how do you account for his never having written to you since that time?"

"He knew that I was married, because a copy of the published notice was sent to him," replied Mary, "and of course he deemed me false, and having never heard anything more from me, has kept silent, of course. I have no idea he knows of my husband's death."

"I hardly know how to advise you," said Eva. "It may be all as you say, and if so, sending this present might be the means of insuring happiness to you both. On the other hand, should he have willfully and intentionally abandoned you, this effort at a renewal of the acquaintance which he, perchance, desires terminated, might result in nothing but shame and confusion. My advice would be to take counsel, not from your inclination, but from your calm, deliberate judgment, and act as that bids you. But in any event do nothing hastily, and nothing you will hereafter regret, let it terminate as it will."

She pronounced the last words with more than usual earnestness and emphasis, for she really feared that her friend would do something rash in the somewhat dangerous ground upon which she was then treading. And having delivered this friendly caution, the two arose from the seat they had been occupying and silently sought the house.

They each retired to their rooms, but for a long time ere Mary retired she sat musing upon the conversation she had just had with Mrs. Earl, and

trying to decide what she should do relative to the subject-matter of the conversation. And when a decision was finally reached, we very much fear that, notwithstanding Eva's impressive caution, inclination had more to do with her decision than her judgment, for she decided to send the books.

And yet we would not condemn her too harshly for so doing. A prude will of course roll up her eyes and elevate her hands in holy horror upon being told that Mary sent a holiday gift to a man to whom she had been once engaged, with whom the engagement had been broken off by his act, and from whom she had not since heard. Indeed, we do not think we would have done just as she did under the same circumstances, but still we do not think there was any criminality connected with what she did—it was merely a matter in which her judgment differed from what ours would —and however ill-advised we may have judged her action to be, we have no right to impute blame to her. If no one in the world ever does anything worse than this, surely this earth will speedily become a much happier place than it now is.

In due time she purchased and sent to her friend "Gus" three volumes of the most popular publications she could find in the city. She wrote her name in each, and without other indication of what she in her secret heart hoped they might accomplish, she sent them on their way into the almost trackless wilds of the far west, there to meet the wanderer and remind him that far away

in the land of civilization and sunshine there was one who at least remembered his name and felt an interest in his welfare.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THERE is no principle of human nature more fully confirmed by the experience and observation of every one than those who have been reclaimed from the path of error, no matter of what kind or by what influences reclaimed—become at once the most earnest and ardent advocates of the right, even excelling in earnestness those by whose efforts their own regeneration has been effected. It is the existence of this principle which leads the reformed inebriate to advocate the cause of temperance with more earnestness and sincerity than one who has never gone astray—it was this principle which made the Apostle Paul the most ardent and devoted of the followers of our Lord and Master, even as before his miraculous conversion he had been the most relentless of persecutors. No one can read the noble defense of this man before King Agrippa without recognizing in all its force the existence of the principle we are considering, and which in connection with the grace of God enabled him then and there to confound his accusers, and almost to persuade his judge to embrace the despised religion of which he was so earnest an advocate.

Thousands of other instances might be adduced, if necessary, to prove the truth of the existence of this principle, but it will hardly be disputed by

any one, and though "the zeal of new converts" has been sometimes spoken of in sneering terms by the unthinking, and though that zeal may sometimes, for want of proper direction, accomplish less of good than it otherwise might, still it cannot successfully be denied that for much of the advancement of every wholesome reform the world is indebted to the existence of this salutary principle.

Mary was no exception to the general rule which we have been considering. She had wandered in the mazy and devious paths of sin and shame, and had drank the bitterest waters of the pool of degradation, but the hand of kindness, guided by the precepts inculcated by one of the noblest of human orders, had been extended to her, and she had been lifted from the mire and placed upon the firm pedestal of virtue and happiness, and now her whole efforts were directed to the relief of the poor unfortunates who were treading the same thorny path from which she had so lately herself escaped. She felt that it was a duty she owed to the memory of the noble man, now sleeping in an unknown grave far from home and friends, by whom her own rescue had been effected, that no opportunity to do good in this direction should be allowed to pass unimproved, and, besides, it was in this way only that she could stifle the reproaches of her conscience for her own past sin.

Many a time did the noble girl in the discharge of her self-imposed duty visit localities where the

brutal oath, the obscene jest, the bacchanalian song would curdle the blood with horror or crimsom the cheek of the hearer with the warm blush of outraged modesty, and where a heart less devoted to the interests of suffering humanity than was hers might well have shrunk appalled. Ah! the world but faintly realizes the horrid character of the scenes amid which she was so constantly laboring. But still she persevered, and many a fallen wretch learned to bless the pale and sorrowful woman to whose gentle ministrations they owed so much.

In these visits she was not unfrequently accompanied by the author, who has seen tears of repentance course down cheeks hallowed by care and remorse and suffering, as she earnestly besought the wretched creatures to turn from their evil ways to the walks of virtue. But not in the way of admonition alone did she manifest her interest in those whose fellow she had so lately been. The contents of her slender purse—all that she could spare from her own absolute necessities, were freely contributed to their assistance, to aid those who were desirous of escaping from the thralldom in which they were held. Ah! how much of good might be accomplished in the way of reclaiming fallen humanity if professed Christians would but make half the efforts in their respective spheres that did the heroine of our tale.

One morning she called upon the author before breakfast, holding in her hand the morning paper.

She seemed somewhat excited, and scarcely waiting to exchange salutations, said:

"Oh! Annie, have you seen the paper this morning? There is an account of the arrest of a young girl only seventeen years of age, as an inmate of one of those horrid places. She will be tried at the police court this morning, and probably sent to the workhouse unless some one befriends her. I am going to see her, and wish you to accompany me. Will you go?"

"What name does the account give her?"

"The name given is Ada Vance, but this is doubtless assumed," replied Mary. "Somehow I feel as if this girl might be saved, and my conscience would forever condemn me if I made no effort to do so."

"I feel," replied her friend, "just as you do about it, but still do not think we should be too hasty about it. Let us do nothing rashly. Had we not better have breakfast before we go?"

"I would much prefer to wait for breakfast until we come back. I want to go to the prison, see her and learn her history before the trial. It may be that we will decide from such an interview that it is useless to try to do anything for her."

"Well, let it be as you say," said her friend. "I will be ready in a moment," and as she spoke she left the room to prepare for the walk.

A few minutes' walk brought us to the city jail, and as Mary was well known to the keeper, having frequently been there on similar errands, we were

admitted without delay. Inquiring for the young girl, the account of whose arrest had so moved my friend, we were pointed to a young woman at the farther end of the room, seated on a bench, with her face hidden in her hands. We approached her, but she seemed entirely unaware of our presence until Mary touched her on the shoulder. Then she raised her head and displayed a countenance of rare beauty, but which was now wan and haggard with care and sorrow, while her eyes were red and swollen with weeping. She waited to be addressed, evidently not knowing what to make of our visit.

"Are you Ada Vance?" asked Mary at length.

"Yes, lady," she replied, in a voice low and musical, but full of plaintive sorrow, "at least," she added hastily, and with some confusion, "that is what I call myself here."

"Then that is not really your name," said Mary, quietly.

"No, it is not. But why do you ask? Of what interest can the name of one like me be to you?"

"Because," said Mary, earnestly, "I want to serve you. I am sure you are not happy in the life you are leading, and I would do something to save you from it."

"Happy! oh! no; indeed, I am most miserable. But there is no help for me," and the poor girl shuddered with agony.

"Do not say that," said Mary, gently stroking her shining black hair. "Will you promise to live

a life of virtue and uprightness if I will get you out of here?"

"Oh! yes, and, lady, I will forever bless you for it. I am not a bad girl at heart, and if you will only take me away from here, I will do anything you may desire. I will work for you every hour of my life, if you will only help me away from here," said she, in tones of the most feverish anxiety, while she gazed earnestly and beseechingly into Mary's face.

"Well, my dear child," said Mary, evidently touched by her emotion, "tell me your history, and I will see what I can do for you. Do not fear to tell me all. You may rely upon me as a true friend, and one who is desirous only to serve you. How came you in this place?"

"I cannot tell you all my life now," said the girl, resting her head upon Mary's bosom, "but I will some day if I get out of here."

"Yes, Ada, tell me now," urged Mary. "You need not hesitate on account of the presence of this lady. She is my friend, and anything you say before her will be as safe as if you told it to me alone. Come, Annie," turning to me, "sit down and hear what this poor girl has to say."

Thus urged she began:

"My real name is Marcia C. Howard. My father died when I was about six years old and I remember very little about him. About three years after his death my mother married a man by the name of Johnson, and she and I went to live with him in

Lawrence. We continued to live together until I was a little over fourteen years of age, when one day in the absence of my mother my stepfather, partly by force and partly by threats, perpetrated upon me an outrage too horrible to tell, and I fled from my home. My mother, having learned my whereabouts, came and took me home, but I dared not tell my reason for leaving, for my stepfather had promised to kill me if I ever revealed his guilty secret. By threats he induced me to keep silent for some time, until I could endure it no longer, and I secretly left home with a traveling circus troupe which came through that section. There was a lady attached to the troupe who took me under her protection, and for a time I got along very well. But one day she was kicked in the temple by a horse belonging to the establishment and instantly killed. In this dilemma I was glad to accept the protection of one of the ring-masters who had paid me some attention, but whose conduct toward me had always been respectful in the extreme. He now appeared to commiserate my loneliness and told me he would care and provide for me as for a sister, and soon after proposed that we should leave the circus and get into some other business in this city. To this I consented, and we came here and stopped at a house on —— Street. I soon learned the character of the house, and attempted to leave, but I was detained a prisoner, and finally drugged and forced to comply with his wishes. After keeping me there about

three weeks, he finally left, and the very next night all the inmates of the house were arrested, and here I am," and overcome by her feelings, she burst into tears and sobbed aloud.

"There, don't cry," said Mary, "but keep up your spirits, and we will see what can be done."

"My only hope is in you," replied Ada, still weeping. "I have no money and no friends, and unless you can do something for me I shall be sent to the workhouse, I suppose. I am aware I deserve it, but still the idea of going there is not a very pleasant one to contemplate."

"Have you heard anything from your mother since you left?"

"Yes, she is dead. She died about a year ago."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"I had one brother, but I have never seen him since our mother's second marriage. He was very much opposed to the marriage and refused to live at home any longer. He went away the same day she was married, in the evening, and never came home again while I was there."

"Do you know where he is?" asked Mary.

"He was in Cleveland, Ohio, the last I heard of him," replied the girl, "but that has been over a year ago, and I do not know whether he is there or not."

"Do you know anything about his circumstances; whether they are such that he could provide for you if you went to him?" asked Mary.

"And more than that, do you think he would receive you?"

"I do not know. He used to think a great deal of me in our childhood days, and I hardly think he would cast me off now," replied Ada. "But I am so changed from what I was then that it is hard to tell."

"Well, we will see. Keep up your spirits and all will yet come out well. And now, for the present, good-bye," said Mary, as with her friend she left the prison.

They went to the court room and there waited until the case of Ada Vance was called. She entered the bar with a firm step, very pale, but calm in outward demeanor, though the heaving bosom and quivering lip told how hard the struggle to maintain her forced appearance of composure. As she glanced around the room and her eye fell upon the forms of her two visitors, her countenance visibly brightened while a sense of relief filled her heart.

When the charge was preferred against her, and she was asked what she had to say, she answered in a low voice, almost inaudible with emotion, "Guilty."

"Policeman, what are the circumstances?" said the magistrate, with an air of professional indifferance.

The guardian of the city told his story in a few brief words.

"Ten dollars fine," said the magistrate, and the trial was ended.

Mary stepped forward, paid the fine, and the three left the room together. Marcia (as we will henceforth call her) was weeping tears of gratitude to her benefactress, and was so much overcome with emotion that it was with difficulty she could walk, but Mary took her home with her and in a short time had her restored to a fair degree of composure, and able to deliberate as to future movements.

"You must remain with me for the present," said Mary. "You can share my room, and meantime I will publish a notice in the Cleveland papers, and if your brother is there we shall soon hear from him."

"I can never forget your kindness," said Marcia, her voice trembling with emotion, "and if it is ever in my power to return it, be assured I shall not fail to do so."

"Never mind about that now," said Mary, tenderly kissing her; "I shall be more than repaid if I succeed in saving you from the life of degradation upon which you were just entering. And I feel assured that this reward I shall not lose."

"By the help of God, you shall not," replied the girl, with solemn energy.

For three weeks Marcia remained with her newfound friend. In the meantime Mary prepared, and sent to Cleveland for publication in the city papers, a notice requesting William C. Howard to

send her his address, promising in return to give information concerning his sister Marcia. At the end of this time came a letter from the gentleman himself, thanking her in the most earnest terms for the promised information, and entreating her to lose no time in enabling him to find his long lost sister. He said he had spent considerable sums of money in advertising and trying to find her for several years, but learning nothing of her whereabouts had come to the conclusion she was dead, and had given up the search.

Poor Marcia was almost beside herself with joy at the receipt of this letter. She felt that she was no longer alone in the world, but that she still had some one to love and care for her, and her heart glowed with renewed gratitude to the friend by whose aid and kindness this happy consummation had been brought about. So impatient was she to set out for the home of her brother, upon receipt of this letter, that she could hardly wait until Mary could make the necessary preparations to accompany her, for Mary would not consent that Marcia should make the journey alone. No, she had "plucked her as a brand from the burning," and though she had the most unlimited confidence in the permanence of her reformation, still she felt that entire compliance with the requirements of duty demanded that she should stay with her until she placed her in the hands of those who would be both able and willing to take care of her. Besides, she knew nothing as yet of

the brother, or his circumstances, and she desired to see for herself that her protege would be properly cared for, as otherwise she had resolved to bring her back to her western home and take charge of her herself.

Her preparations were all completed in about twenty-four hours, and they entered the cars for Cincinnati, intending to proceed thence by rail to the home of Marcia's brother. They arrived at Cleveland in due time without any incidents worthy of note, and were greeted by Mr. Howard with a warmth and earnestness of welcome which gave certain assurance that the little wanderer had found rest and a secure retreat at last.

After the first greetings were over, Mr. Howard, Marcia and Mary, retired to a room by themselves, where all the incidents of the past were related and fully discussed and commented on. Mary had insisted upon this before she left, for she felt unwilling to leave Marcia until a full explanation had been made and her brother had expressed his views relative to the same. He listened in silence to her tale, and when it was finished, he silently folded her in his arms.

"My poor sister," said he, "you have been more sinned against than sinning. But you shall never want protection or shelter again. As for you, noble woman," said he, turning to Mary and extending his hand while his eyes filled with tears of gratitude, "God will reward you for your kind-

ness to a poor unfortunate like my sister—man never can."

Mary took the extended hand in silence. Her heart was too full for her to trust herself and she made no reply, but an angel might have envied her feelings. She felt at that moment the highest delight which can thrill with emotion the human heart—the consciousness of having performed a good action, and saved an immortal soul from everlasting destruction. She felt that she had partially atoned for her long career of sinfulness, and nothing could have induced her to yield the satisfaction with which she contemplated her action.

She remained in Cleveland a day or two at the house of Mr. Howard, and then took her leave, followed by the blessings and good wishes of the entire family. She went without the least misgiving as to the future of Marcia, for Mr. Howard was a gentleman of refinement, culture and correct principles, while his pecuniary circumstances were such as to enable him to provide abundantly and comfortably for his sister, thus placing her at once and forever beyond the reach of temptation. In his excellent wife, too, he had a most efficient helpmeet in the good work to be done, and Mary felt assured that the reformation of Marcia would encounter no coldness or indifference at her hands, and she left feeling the most abiding confidence that the work which she had so happily begun would be carried on to the perfect day.

Before she left, Mr. Howard insisted upon reim-

bursing her the money she had expended on Marcia's account, but to this she would not consent. She assured him that she desired nothing of the kind; that what she had done had given her a sense of peace and rest to which she had been a stranger for years, and now were she to accept any compensation it would destroy all the happiness she derived from this source. When he found she was not to be shaken, he insisted that she should at least accept a present of a hundred dollars, to be used in some similar case. To this she at last consented, and receiving the money from him she returned to her boarding-house at Indianapolis, where the atmosphere seemed to glow with a brighter halo than before on account of her noble deed.

CHAPTER XIX.

SEVERAL months of Mary's life now passed in peace and quiet—indeed she is accustomed to speak of the eight months immediately following her return from Cleveland as among the most quiet periods of her whole life—not that her labor of love was by any means intermitted, but nothing worthy of special mention in this story took place. She prosecuted with unremitting industry the labor of the vocation she had chosen, and in devotion to this, and in contemplation of the good deed she had done, she found relief from the sorrowful reflections which would otherwise have crowded upon her.

She had corresponded constantly with her Cleveland friends, and many a highly prized token of esteem and good-will had she received from them, while they had never ceased to invoke Heaven's choicest blessings upon her head for the inestimable favor she had conferred upon them.

But when she had been at home eight months, the mail one morning brought her two letters which created quite a buzz of excitement in her little world. The one was from Cleveland, while the other bore a post-mark which at once arrested her attention, and for a moment caused her blood almost to stand still. From the shining land of gold, far off among the fastnesses of the Rocky

Mountains, came that little messenger, and who shall wonder or blame her that for a moment she hesitated, dreading, yet wishing to open it, and master its contents? Would it fructify or blast the hopes, the germs of which had been so long cherished down deep in the most secret recesses of her heart? For a short space she stood in silent indecision and then broke the seal.

And as her eyes fell upon the first words, a low cry of heartfelt joy escaped her lips, and murmuring, "My God, I thank thee," she sank upon a chair, while a deep anthem of thankfulness arose from the true heart which had so long borne in silence its heavy burden. For there was the blessed evidence that her waiting and watching so many long and weary months had not been in vain. He who had so long been the master of her heart and the possessor of its choicest treasures—he whom she had so long and truly loved, almost as it were against hope—was coming back to her to claim the fulfillment of the promise so long since given and to make her his bride. Yes, her constant love was at last to meet its reward, and a bright haven of rest for her weary and storm-tossed bark was just opening to view. The angry waves of fate by which her frail craft had been so long buffeted were about to be hushed into everlasting quiet and calm repose, and what wonder that deep and fervent thankfulness to the Giver of all took possession of and pervaded her entire soul?

During all this time she had neglected, and almost forgotten the letter from Cleveland. She knew of course that it was from her friend Marcia, and the deep interest she felt in all that concerned her would have effectually prevented any forgetfulness or inattention under any circumstances of less overwhelming importance to herself. And now, when she had regained her mental composure to some extent, she returned to the perusal of this letter with a sort of half self-reproach for having so long neglected it.

And here a new surprise awaited her. The letter was indeed from her friend, but she was entirely unprepared for its contents, for they were neither more nor less than an earnest invitation to attend her approaching wedding in the character of bridesmaid. She was about being united with a most worthy young man by the name of Charles Cady. He was a lawyer by profession, and though but lately admitted to practice, he had already achieved a position in the ranks of his profession which might well be envied by many a practitioner of twice his years. He had accidently met Marcia when making a business call at the house of her brother, and had been deeply impressed with her beauty and intelligence, and this first impression had been but more and more developed and strengthened by the subsequent interviews which he constantly sought with her, until at last he had become convinced that she was absolutely essential to his future happiness.

For a long time she had discouraged his advances, although her heart bade her pursue directly the opposite course, but when he had at last embraced a favorable opportunity to tell her of his love, and implored her to share his lot, she had referred him to her brother, telling him that if after such an interview he still remained of the same opinion, she would then consent to become his bride. In this interview Mr. Howard had unfolded to his young friend the entire history of Marcia's past life; her fall and reformation, and the circumstances with which each had been attended. When the story was completed he sat in silent meditation for a short time and then sought Marcia's presence.

"My dear Marcia," said he tenderly, taking her by the hand, "I know all, and my mind is still unchanged. I feel that you are as necessary as ever to my happiness, and I come to claim the fulfillment of your promise."

"Has my brother told you all of my past history?" she asked, timidly.

"Yes, everything," he replied, "and the recital has but confirmed my previously formed impressions of your character. While I may and do regret that you should have fallen into error, still your noble truthfulness in relation to the matter is the best proof that the error never contaminated your heart, and but increases my confidence in you. Will you now be my wife?"

"Yes, Charles, I will," she replied, fervently,

"and by the blessing of Heaven I will endeavor to so live as to merit and justify your generous confidence."

"God bless you," he ejaculated in tones of deep, earnest affection, as he clasped her in his arms and imprinted a warm kiss upon her lips, and thus was their troth plighted.

And now the time had come when their vows were to be redeemed, or rather superseded by the higher and holier, because more solemnly pledged, vows of the marriage state. And it was to assist at the pledging of these higher and holier vows that Mary was now so urgently invited by her friend, for Marcia had declared that under no circumstances could she consent to wed without the presence of her whom she regarded with an affectionate veneration almost akin to that with which a Christian contemplates his Divine Savior.

To such an invitation so earnestly and tenderly urged Mary had of course but one answer. Although it would interfere sadly with the prosecution of her vocation, which was so essential to her subsistence, she could not refuse the request of her friend, nor would she forego the pleasure of witnessing the union for life of one in whom she had taken so deep an interest, with one whose nobleness and truth enabled him to triumph over the spirit of persecution too generally prevalent in the world. Accordingly, she dispatched by the first mail a letter to her friend, warmly congratulating her upon her approaching nuptials, and assuring

her that she would be present on the interesting occasion.

Ah! how earnestly she wished that that other dear friend, whose missive of love she had but that morning received, was there to accompany her—to share in the pleasure with which she would witness the marriage of her friend. But it might not be. Many hundreds of weary miles separated them, and many a long week would elapse before she should see his loved features or listen to the warm words in which he would convey the assurances so glowingly expressed in the letter before her, and she must be content for a season yet to watch and wait, although that season, unlike the ones through which she had so recently passed, would be modified and warmed by the gay coloring of well-grounded hope. But to the wedding.

When she reached the residence of Mr. Howard in Cleveland, she was welcomed by all with a warmth which convinced her that her past efforts in behalf of the unfortunate outcast had by no means been forgotten. Marcia and her brother, as well as the family of the latter, vied with each other in the effort to prove the sincerity of their gratitude to her for having saved from eternal ruin her who, but for the interposition of Mary, would doubtless have been forever lost, but who was now loved, honored and admired by all who knew her, and who was so soon to become the bride of a noble and honorable man. Mr. Cady, too, the

affianced of her friend, to whom she was introduced on the very evening of her arrival, testified in the warmest manner his appreciation of the goodness which had induced her to do so much for one who was now so dear to him. But pleasing as were these testimonials to her, she had still a higher and holier reward—that reward which invariably follows the performance of a good action—the whisper of an approving conscience, and the smile upon her soul of an approving God.

It is not necessary that we should go into the details of all the preparations for the wedding—the dress of the bride or of her bridesmaid, the appearance of the groom and groomsman, or any matter of that kind. Our lady readers can imagine all they choose in relation to that, and as to those of the other sex it would be merely "love's labor lost." We mean no disrespect to the sterner sex, however. Suffice it to say that the bride looked very beautiful, and when she and the chosen of her heart uttered the vows which bound them together for life, it was with an earnestness and sincerity which convinced all who heard them that those vows would, with the blessing of Heaven, be kept in the fullness of their letter and spirit throughout all time to come.

After the ceremony was performed and the friends present had tendered their congratulations, the entire company descended to the dining-room, where a magnificent collation awaited them. And we venture to assert that never, even in the hospit-

able mansion of Mr. Howard, had been assembled a happier crowd or one more free from care than graced it on this occasion. Wit and merriment, not of the ephemeral and unnatural character which flows from the use of wine (for that not unfrequent bane of fashionable society found no place upon Mr. Howard's table), but that born of freedom from care and well-cultivated minds, floated gaily around, and time fled by unnoticed until the coachman appeared and informed them that the carriage was in waiting to take them to the depot, and that it was almost time for the departure of the train which was to bear them away to Cincinnati.

Cincinnati was the place of residence of Mr. Cady's parents, and it had been arranged that they should go thither to spend the honeymoon. It was with some degree of trepidation that Marcia went to visit her parents of a few hours. She had never seen them, and she almost feared lest they might not approve the choice their son had made, but never was any one more happily disappointed. Her beauty, intelligence and evident goodness as completely captivated the hearts of the old people as the same qualities had already ensnared the heart of the son, and before she had been there two hours she felt as if she had known them all her life, while they upon their part loved her almost as though she had been their own child by the law of nature instead of only by the law of marriage.

After a few weeks spent in uninterrupted happiness in the society of her father-in-law and mother-in-law, the new wife departed in company with her husband and Mary (who had accompanied them from Cleveland) for Indianapolis, where, after leaving her, the loving husband and wife were to proceed on the way to the home they were to occupy in Cleveland. No incidents worthy of note transpired on their homeward journey, and in due time they reached the home of Mary, where, after an affectionate adieu, they left her in her loneliness, while they went to take possession of the little world of love in which they were henceforth to live and move.

It would not be strictly just to say that Mary envied the lot of her friend; no such feeling found a place in her heart, and yet she could not suppress a sigh as she contrasted Marcia's situation with her own. Not for worlds would she have detracted one jot or tittle from the happiness which she knew her friend enjoyed, even though it had been necessary to assure her own, but yet she could not avoid wondering why it was that she must ever thus see others around her enjoying all the happiness of this world, while her pathway remained ever lonely and beset with interminable thorns. The indulgence of such feelings, however, was but momentary with her; her better nature soon drove them away, and with a firm reliance upon the goodness of that Providence who had so long watched over and protected her, she turned

once more with a firm spirit to the performance of the daily tasks which her lonely situation required at her hands.

But we have for sometime lost sight of Eva Earl and must return to her for a short time. Sometime before the receipt by Mary of the two letters before mentioned, Eva had left home for a visit to New York. She had a cousin by the name of Clara Aston residing in that great metropolis; that city which united within itself, perhaps, greater extremes of wealth and want, luxury and misery, virtue and vice than any other upon the face of the civilized world; where the most pious divines and humanitarians and the most vicious, degraded and unprincipled beings which disgrace the name and character of common humanity live and move and walk side by side, and where every form of vice and wretchedness abound with a profusion perhaps unknown anywhere else. This cousin had been on a visit to Indianapolis, and when the time for her return home came she earnestly and cordially invited Eva to accompany her. And as she had never visited the great city, and her health was moreover delicate, her father had advised her to accept the invitation, trusting that the journey and the change of scenery would restore something of her wonted bloom to her now faded cheeks; and after spending some weeks there, she had returned but a few days before Mary reached home from Cincinnati.

But the journey so far from restoring her to health, as had been fondly hoped, had produced just the contrary effect. She seemed to be in a state of settled melancholy, while her physical condition was even worse than her mental. She had evidently met with some severe shock which threatened the most serious consequences. Her loving and anxious father tried in vain to ascertain the cause of her illness and depression of spirits, but her modesty prevented her confiding the fatal secret to him, and so it remained until the affectionate intimacy existing between herself and our heroine induced her to reveal it to the latter. Her story was substantially as follows :

She had been very much interested in the sights and scenes of New York, having never been in a large city before. Her cousin had shown her the utmost kindness and attention and had taken her to visit all the noted places in the city, little dreaming that her kindness was to be productive of results which would plant a rankling thorn in the breast of the recipient of her attentions, and which would for a time even threaten to undermine her reason and deprive her of life.

Among other places they visited the —— Street lunatic asylum, and went through the whole of that celebrated institution. On their way thither Clara had told her cousin of the sad case of a young lady confined there—one with whom she had formerly been very intimately acquainted, but who had now been an inmate of the institution for seven or eight

months. Her name was Anna Bird. She was a young lady of great purity of character and of a most tender, affectionate and confiding disposition, the only daughter of a widow who kept a small boarding house on Bleecker Street. She had been wooed and won by a young man of engaging exterior and apparently good character, who boarded for some time with her mother. They were betrothed, and the day was set for the wedding. She had made all necessary preparations, even to procuring her bridal robes, when but two or three days before the one set for the wedding, her lover had been attacked with the cholera, and despite her affectionate care and the utmost skill of the physician, he had died in the most excruciating agony. The sudden blighting of all her hopes, added to the agony caused by witnessing the torments amid which her betrothed had died, had dethroned her reason, and from that day to this poor Anna had been a raving maniac. She had occasional lucid intervals, but at other times her demonstrations were so violent as to require the closest and strictest confinement to prevent her from destroying herself.

This sad story brought the tears to Eva's eyes, but she was soon to be subjected to a shock, of the severity of which she did not even dream.

While passing through one of the wards of the hospital in company with Clara and an attendant, she was suddenly startled by hearing a female voice pronounce in maniac tones the name of Ed-

ward Earl, followed by a course of passionate and frantic entreaty to him to come back to her once more. As the name smote upon her ears, Eva started as though struck by a bolt and turned as pale as the whitewashed wall near which she was standing.

"Ah! yes," said the attendant, observing her emotion, "poor Anna is in one of her worst moods to-day. But never fear, lady, she is too well confined to do any harm. Would you like to see her?"

"Yes," replied Eva, moved by some indefinable feeling of curiosity, "I have heard of her and would very much like to see her."

"This way, then, ladies," said the attendant, turning short to the right, "and do you come first, Miss Aston, for your presence always seems to exercise a soothing influence upon her."

Trembling in every limb with some weighty emotion which she could not define, for she could not believe there was any connection between herself and the poor, raving maniac before her, Eva mechanically approached the cell in which the wretched being was confined. And still, the familiar name, pronounced in those almost demonaic tones, which seemed to chill and curdle her blood with horror, came to her ears amid the weird laughter and fitful ravings with which she was surrounded.

As they approached the cell the poor inmate came forward, and Clara spoke to her.

"Anna," said she kindly, "how do you feel to-day?"

A gleam of partial intelligence passed over her wan features, she ceased her ravings, and it was evident that though not entirely lucid she had recognized her old friend.

'Is that you, Clara?" she said, "I thought you were never coming to see me again."

Her articulation was slow and uncertain, and the gleam of intelligence was evidently very feeble.

"And who is that with you?" she continued, catching sight of Eva, and pointing her long, bony finger at her.

"That is my cousin, Eva Earl," said Clara, unsuspectingly, for she never knew that Eva had been deserted by her husband, but always supposed she was a widow.

"Eva Earl, did you say?" queried the maniac. "Then you ought to know my Edward. May be he is a cousin of yours; or may be a brother. Wouldn't that be nice, for you are a sweet lady, and I love you dearly. Did you ever see him?"

"Not that I know of," replied Eva, in a choking voice, for she could not help feeling that he must be the same. "And yet it could not be," she said to herself.

"You never did. Well, here is his picture," said the poor creature, removing from her neck a locket which she had been allowed to keep for the reason that her madness seemed to increase in violence whenever they attempted to remove it.

"Is he not beautiful?" she continued, extending the locket through the grating to Eva.

Eva took it in her hand, and at that moment a fearful scream, followed by a peal of frantic laughter from the poor wretch before them, told all too plainly that the interval of partial lucidness had passed, and that her dread malady had returned in full force.

"Open it," said Clara, looking at the locket which her cousin held in her hand, dreading yet desiring to open and almost uncertain what to do.

Thus encouraged Eva touched the spring of the locket, but the moment her eyes fell upon the likeness it contained, she uttered a scream which almost rivaled in wildness that of poor Anna, and sunk fainting to the floor. For that one brief glance had revealed to her the features of her faithless husband, of him who had promised before God and man to love, honor and cherish her for all time to come! And though he had long since ceased to perform this vow, she had not been able to persuade herself that he was the perfidious villain he really was. But now the damning proof was before her and the shock was too great for her enfeebled frame.

Terrified almost beyond measure, Clara raised her cousin's head in her arms while the attendant hastened for restoratives, which were soon applied. Eva shortly opened her eyes and they fell upon the locket which lay on the floor beside her.

"Take it away," she whispered to her cousin,

with a painful shudder. "Give it back to her, and let us go home. Oh! why did I ever come here?" she moaned in agony.

"What is the matter, dear cousin?" asked the terrified Clara, for she knew something terrible had happened, but what, she was utterly unable to conceive.

"I will tell you all when we get home," said Eva, shuddering again. "But let us go now."

The attendant and Clara assisted her to the carriage which was in waiting, and it rolled away. As soon as they were seated, Eva threw herself upon the breast of her friend, and in low and agonized tones which were constantly interrupted by her sobs, she told the whole sad story of her married life, with which the reader is already familiar. Clara listened with undisguised amazement and horror to the recital, and at its close gave vent to expressions of indignation at the conduct of Edward Earl so intense that Eva was forced to defend him, albeit her own bleeding heart almost sanctioned every word her incensed cousin uttered. What a sublime spectacle. This woman thus wronged and trampled in the dust, pleading the cause of him who had by his own villainy blighted her young life and turned it into an arid desert. Surely, if Mercy and Forgiveness, twin sisters, have any representatives on earth, they are to be found in a pure, true-hearted and noble woman.

Amid all the anguish caused by this positive

proof of the unworthiness of her late husband, Eva found one source of never-failing consolation. While she mourned the wreck and ruin which his perfidy had caused, not only to herself but to poor Anna Bird, she fervently thanked God that he had been prevented from committing the crime of bigamy. Although cut off in the midst of his sins, with all his terrible misdeeds unrepented of, from that crime at least he was free, and she devoutly praised the hand that had arrested him upon the threshold of that fearful and heinous sin.

But her visit in New York was at an end. This dreadful discovery had put an end to any pleasure she might otherwise have enjoyed there, and as soon as she had sufficiently recovered from the shock to be able to travel by rail, she departed for her home in company with a gentleman of her acquaintance in Indianapolis, who chanced to be in New York on business.

CHAPTER XX.

SUCH was the sad story which Eva related to our heroine one evening as she lay, pale and almost helpless, upon a couch, by the side of which Mary had spent all the time she could spare from her duties since her return from attending the wedding of Marcia.

But though Eva had mustered strength sufficient to endure the journey from New York to Indianapolis, it had only been by overtasking her powers, and now the unnatural draft had to be repaid with interest, in accordance with the immutable laws of nature. For some time after reaching home, therefore, she continued to grow weaker and weaker, until at last her life came to be despaired of, and while thus enfeebled, not only in body, but also in mind, she seemed unwilling to have any one but Mary do anything for her. No hand could smooth her pillows as hers; no one else knew so well as she how to prepare the draughts which cooled her burning fever; no other voice could soothe as hers when reflection upon the dread scene in the lunatic asylum threatened, as it often did, to drive her to distraction—in short, her physicians asserted that Eva's final recovery depended very much on the presence and care of Mary.

In this emergency, self was not to be thought of for a moment. She therefore gave up her situation

in the gallery and devoted herself exclusively to the care of her sick and suffering friend, and with marvelous fidelity was her self-imposed task discharged. During the long and weary weeks which beheld Eva prostrate upon her couch of suffering, save when compelled by the imperious demands of exhausted nature to seek temporary repose, Mary was never absent from her side. What mattered it to her that at times her head grew almost dizzy with pain from want of fresh air and exercise; what matter if she grew pale and thin, or if her limbs at times, from sheer weariness, almost refused to obey the dictates of her will? She was performing a labor of love and duty, and the feeble voice of the pallid sufferer on the low couch in the corner of the room never called in vain for fresh exertions at her hands.

Such constant and unremitting care and attention could not fail to bring back life and health and strength to the form of the invalid, and at last the physician told the anxious friends around her that danger was past, and that with proper care and nursing she would certainly recover. "And to your faithful and affectionate care," said he, turning to Mary, "much more than to any skill of mine, is she indebted for her escape from the embrace of the grim monster. But she is still very weak, and though you have already been very heavily taxed, we shall have to demand for her a still farther continuance of the burden, though I hope and trust it will not be for very long."

"It is no burden, but rather a pleasure to me," replied Mary, sweetly, "and I am only thankful if I have been instrumental in sparing this household, to which I am indebted for so many kindnesses, the misery of seeing one arm-chair forever vacant. But I fear," she continued, "you overrate my poor services."

"Indeed I do not," replied the old physician, earnestly, "the labor of our profession would be reduced one-half, and would be much more frequently crowned with success, if all our patients would be as fortunate in securing nurses as was our friend here. Believe me, Miss Mary, you merit all that I have said and much more."

The doctor spoke truthfully when he said that Eva would still require careful nursing and attention for a time ere she could be considered as upon the road to convalescence. But Mary had been faithful to her trust too long to falter now, and day by day saw the fair patient gaining strength, but oh! so slowly. Gradually, very gradually, the color came back into her faded cheeks, and finally, when spring had come with its balmy breezes and warm, sunshiny days, and singing birds and beauteous roses, Eva Earl was able to ride out in an easy carriage, while warm shawls and robes protected her from the still lingering chills of the reluctantly departing winter. From this time her recovery was much more rapid, and soon she no longer needed the care of her nurse.

But Mary returned no more to the gallery. Eva

would not consent to her going out to work any more under any circumstances.

"No," said she, emphatically, "you have saved my life, and now the very least I can do in return is to do what is in my power to render your life comfortable. And besides," she continued mischievously, "your lover will soon be coming from the far west with a ship-load of gold, and it will never do for him to come and find you at work when you ought to be waiting for him, clad in bridal robes, and with your lamp trimmed and burning."

"I do not suppose," replied Mary, "that he would think any the less of me if he came and found me honestly toiling for my own livelihood. If he would, he is not the man I think he is."

"Of course he would not, but then you have worked very hard over my worthless carcass, and now you must rest," said Eva, laughingly. "But one thing must be arranged between us before he comes," she continued, half in jest and half in earnest. "When he takes you away he must take me, too, for I can never bear to be separated from you again."

"Nothing could please me better, I assure you," replied Mary, affectionately embracing her friend, "but what would your father say? Would he be willing to give up his daughter and the pet of his house, little Eddie?"

"I fear not," replied Eva, "nor would I be willing to ask him to make the sacrifice, and yet I

should like to have you always with me, for I really feel that I owe my life to you."

"Not so, Eva, you give me too much credit," replied our heroine with becoming modesty. "True, I did what little I could for you, but no more than you would have done for me under the same circumstances, and I do not think I am entitled to any special thanks for it. To God, rather, let us give thanks for your deliverance from the fearful danger which threatened you."

"You are right, my dear friend, to Him belongs the praise. But at the same time be assured that I none the less appreciate your kind and tender care of me, and that should occasion ever demand, or you unfortunately be placed in similar circumstances, my conduct shall bear the amplest testimony to that appreciation," said Eva, earnestly.

Time, the great unfolder of all events, too soon proved that this was no idle promise on Eva's part.

A few weeks after the conversation we have narrated, Mary was out on a charitable visit to a poor family living in the suburbs of the city, when a cold and most violent storm of wind and rain came up. In a few moments her clothing was completely drenched, and she became chilled to the very marrow of her bones, and when she reached home her teeth chattered like one in an ague. The result was that when she arose the next morning, her head throbbed painfully, while her throat was so sore that she could neither

speak nor swallow without the most intense pain.

Eva, who realized much more fully than herself the condition of her friend, urged her to keep her room that day, at least, but Mary refused, saying it was merely a cold and she should be well enough in the morning. But morning came, and found her unable to rise. When she failed to make her appearance at the breakfast-table, Eva went to her room and found her suffering with a parching fever.

She at once sent for the same kind, old physician who had so faithfully attended her during her illness. He came, and carefully examined his patient, evincing a degree of anxiety quite unusual with him. Her disease was typhoid fever in its most violent form, and from the somewhat enfeebled condition of Mary's system (she had never fully recovered from the long days and nights of watching beside Eva, while her constant charitable labors had made still farther drains upon her endurance) he evidently apprehended the most serious consequences. He assured Eva that nothing short of such nursing and care as she had herself received would enable the frail bark of her friend to weather the storm, prescribed some remedies, and took his leave, promising to call again during the day.

He came again towards evening, but her condition was far from reassuring him, or relieving the anxiety he evidently felt on her account. He repeated, and this time with even more impressive-

ness than he had used in the morning, his assurance that nothing but the most watchful care and attention would enable her to survive the attack.

From this time Eva established herself as chief nurse at the sick bed, and during the many long and weary days which elapsed while the life of Mary hung trembling in the balance, she was only less assiduous and unremitting in her attentions than Mary had been, because her physical strength and endurance were less. And her labors were at last crowned with complete success.

One day when the old physician came and made his customary examination of his patient, instead of the usual doubting, uncertain shake of the head, his whole countenance brightened with hope and satisfaction.

"Ah! Miss Eva," he exclaimed—he always called her Miss, notwithstanding his full knowledge of her past life—"you have now repaid the debt you owed Miss Mary. She saved your life by her watchfulness, and now you have done the same for her."

"Do you think, then, doctor, that she is out of danger?" queried Eva, while the tone in which she spoke showed at once her confidence in the good old man, and the satisfaction which the announcement of his opinion afforded her.

"Not entirely out of danger, certainly," replied he, "but she has passed the crisis of her disease, and we may safely affirm that with anything like proper care she will recover. And that she will

receive the best of care, the treatment she has already received is the best possible guaranty," he hastened to add, fearing that his words might be construed to imply some doubts upon this point.

"Be assured she will, so far as it is in my power to accomplish," replied she earnestly, and the doctor soon after took his leave.

From this time the convalescence of Mary was rapid. Notwithstanding the fierce attack which had been made upon the citadel of her life by the fell disease, it had been less insidious and undermining than that by which Eva had been prostrated, and her superior vitality enabled her to rally much more quickly. It was but about two weeks from the time of the conversation between Eva and the doctor until she was able to sit in an easy chair for some time together, while Eva sat by her side and read to her some interesting story or cheered her with suitable conversation.

One of her earliest inquiries when she was able to converse at all, was whether any letters had arrived for her during her illness. Eva replied by placing in her hands several which had been taken from the post-office and carefully laid by at a time when it was quite uncertain whether she would ever be able to read them. She took them and turned them all over one by one, examined each superscription, and then without breaking the seals of any lay back upon her pillow with a weary sigh. Poor girl! the letter she looked for

was not there. A short time she lay in silence with her eyes closed, and then Eva, who was watching her closely, saw the tears forcing their way between the tightly closed lids.

She arose, and bending over the invalid, pressed a warm and affectionate kiss upon her quivering lips. In a moment Mary had wound her feeble arms about her neck, and was sobbing in a half hysterical manner upon the bosom of her friend.

Eva was terrified. She feared the effect of this state of excitement upon the enfeebled frame of the sufferer, but for a few moments she was utterly at a loss what to say or do. She therefore let her weep without attempting to check her, for a short time, and then gently wiping away her tears, she said:

"My poor Mary, what is the matter?"

"Oh!" replied the invalid, "I am so much disappointed. I thought I would certainly have a letter from Augustus. It has been so very, very long since he has written to me. And now I don't care for any of these," she added, with the petulance characteristic of persons whose minds as well as their bodies have been temporarily weakened by a severe attack of the disease from which she was just recovering.

"Do not feel so badly, my dear friend," said Eva, soothingly. "He may have written you several times and the letters may have been delayed by some irregularity of the mails. Or perhaps the clerk at the post-office may have overlooked

one or more letters for you. There are a thousand ways of accounting for your failure to hear from him without resorting to any of the horrible imaginings which I see are rioting in that busy little brain of yours," smiling as she spoke.

"I fear not. My heart tells me something dreadful has happened," said Mary, with a fresh burst of tears.

"Nay," said Eva, "you do not now display the customary good sense of my friend. Be more calm and reasonable, and my word for it, this matter will all be right in the end. I will go myself to the post-office and see if by any possibility they may have overlooked a letter for you."

"No, you need not do that," replied Mary, now more calm than before, "I know I have been very foolish, but I am weak, and my disappointment was so bitter. You will forgive me, will you not?"

"I have nothing to forgive," replied Eva. "But I am glad to see you feeling better. Will you look at your letters now?"

"You may read them to me, if you please. I do not feel equal to the task of reading them myself."

Eva commenced, but long before she had finished reading she observed that her listener had sunk into slumber. "Poor girl," she murmured, "how bitterly was she disappointed. But she will feel better when she wakes."

The next day Eva went to the post-office herself, and to her joy found there a letter for her friend

which bore the post-mark of the far-off gold fields of the west. Her satisfaction, however, was but feeble compared with the intense delight with which the sick girl received the cheering messenger. For a time Eva feared that the effect of her intense joy would be even more serious than the consequences threatened by her disappointments of the day before. But it is said that "joy never kills," and certainly it was so in this instance, for from the time of the receipt of this proof of her lover's faithfulness she seemed to gain new strength with each succeeding day, until her friends, and even the old physician, were all amazed at the rapidity of her convalescence. They could not understand the deep, powerful, all-absorbing love which pervaded her heart and lent its generous, strengthening influence to every part of even her physical frame.

CHAPTER XXI.

About three weeks after the events narrated in the last chapter, the two friends were one morning sitting in their room together, and Mary now quite convalescent, was reading the morning Journal, while Eva was silently engaged in some embroidery which she was preparing for a frock for her little boy. Suddenly Mary started up with the exclamation, "I am going."

Eva looked up in surprise. "Where are you going?" she asked in a tone which betrayed the predominant feeling in her mind—that of astonishment.

"Ah! I beg your pardon," said Mary. "I did not think but you were reading the paper as well as myself. Miss Anna E. Dickinson is going to lecture at Masonic Hall to-morrow evening, on woman's rights, and I would not miss hearing her for the world."

"I would not care particularly to hear her," replied Eva, entirely uninspired by her friend's enthusiasm.

"Not care particularly about hearing the most eloquent champion of the rights of her sex!" cried Mary, in astonishment. "Why, Eva, what do you mean?"

"Just what my words imply," replied Eva, who, lacking the energy and positive force of character

of her friend, had wholly failed to perceive and comprehend the importance of the question which the lecturer proposed to discuss. "I shall probably go and listen to her out of curiosity, as I would go to hear a troupe of minstrels rehearse their nonsense, but it would be no great disappointment to me if anything should occur to prevent my doing so."

This was the first time this subject, which has of late engrossed so much of the attention of the most profound and eminent thinkers and philosophers of our time, had ever been mentioned between the two friends, and each seemed equally astonished at the views of the other. For a moment neither spoke, but looked straight into each other's eyes. Then Mary said slowly:

"Eva, are you not an advocate of and believer in woman's rights?"

"I certainly am," replied her friend, "but not of usurpations."

"Are you not in favor of the mental, moral, social and political elevation of womankind?"

"I would have the mental, moral and social position of woman improved to the utmost possible extent, and I would leave her political status just as it now is," replied Eva. "I think she now has all the political and civil rights, as you call them, which would conduce to her happiness."

"But what good reason can be given why woman should not have the right to vote and hold office as

well as men? Aye, and I think the offices would in many instances be better filled than they are now if women were admitted to them," said Mary.

"It may be that in some cases they would," said Eva, "but what does that prove? Not that women are naturally or intrinsically better than men, but simply that the people do not in all cases choose the best men for officers. And what assurance have we that if women were admitted to office the same results would not follow? The same influences which corrupt men, and render them dishonest in office, would corrupt women also; and as woman, when uncontaminated, is more refined and has more innate purity than man, so, to the shame of our sex be it spoken, when once corrupted by contact with the rougher features of life, she becomes more degraded and unprincipled than man, and I fear that our sex would be corrupted more than the offices would be purified by our admission to them."

"But would not her innate purity, of which you speak, have a tendency to refine and elevate the political world, and so bring it up to a proper standard?" said Mary. "I think it would, and that certainly is a reason for admitting women to its privileges."

"It might be the case for a time," replied Eva, "but the result to woman would be disastrous, I fear, as well as in the end to the very system which you are seeking to elevate. You can take your pocket handkerchief and wipe fruit stains

from your hands—your hands are thereby purified, but your handkerchief is soiled; and if you repeat the process often enough, the time will come when the handkerchief will not only refuse to remove any more stains, but will instead, impart its own discoloration to the hand. So I fear it would be if women were admitted to hold office. The purifying effect would be but temporary, while woman in time becoming corrupt, would sink the offices still lower in corruption than they now are."

"Then you would hold that woman has no power of her own to preserve the purity which you say characterizes her? You would compare her to a handkerchief," said Mary, sententiously.

"By no means. I admit that the illustration is an extreme one, but we know that women have been corrupted, and that when so they are more corrupt than men. This is my argument."

"I should have no fears of any such result," said Mary. "I have more faith in woman than you seem to have. I believe that the mass of women have sufficient strength of character to protect themselves from the defilement you so much deprecate, notwithstanding the fact that here and there a single one may be found who has been corrupted and degraded, as you say! And even in these isolated cases men are to blame for such corruption."

"Very true. But if the women had been incor-

ruptible, men could not have corrupted them, could they?"

"Perhaps not. But then, does not woman need these rights and privileges, and the benefit of the ballot for her own protection?" queried Mary. "As matters now stand, all our rights of person and property are at the will and pleasure of a set of self-constituted lords of creation, who assume the absolute right to dispose of us without the least regard to our feelings or wishes. As matters now stand, the end and aim of woman's life is to become the wife of some man and the mother of his children, and thenceforward she must be entirely subservient to him; must have no will of her own. No matter how dearly she may love the home where she had resided during all the happiest years of her wedded life, or how comfortable or convenient it may be—if her lord and master wishes to sell out and move to the far west, where the only comforts consist of roaming wild beasts and barbarous Indians, she has nothing to do but to sign the deed and accompany him. What matters it that her already heavy burdens are increased ten-fold by the change—the law has said that she must submit to the will of her husband, and he has determined to go. So it must be."

"I have no patience with the argument which assumes that men and women are naturally enemies," said Eva, earnestly. For my part I regard their interests, and I believe the mass of mankind regard them—as does the law—as identical. If,

in the case you mention, the husband and father changes his location, he must do it either for the purpose of bettering his financial condition, or for the sole purpose of inflicting the discomforts of which you speak upon her whom he has vowed to love, honor and cherish. If for the first, does not the wife share in the benefits equally with him? If for the last, does he not inflict the same discomforts upon himself, to say nothing of the improbability of any one in his senses acting from any such motive?"

"But if women own property and pay taxes, should they not have a voice in making the laws by which their property is governed, and their taxes assessed? I regard it as the height of injustice to require a woman who owns, perhaps, a hundred thousand dollars worth of property, to pay the taxes assessed by the votes of a lot of fellows, a thousand of whom, perhaps, do not own one-half the property which this single woman owns."

"But does not that argument prove too much?" asked Eva. "And if it does, you know that according to the logicians, it proves nothing at all. If property gives a right to vote, then the exercise of the right ought to be just in proportion to the amount of property owned. So that if a person who owns one hundred dollars worth of property casts one vote, the person who owns one hundred thousand dollars worth ought to cast one thousand votes. This would place the poor at the mercy of

the rich, and destroy republican institutions at once."

"But surely," persisted Mary, "there is no good reason for saying that the rights of women in respect to the ballot-box should not be equal to those of men, whether based upon property qualification or not."

"But again your argument proves too much, and is therefore bad. If women should vote, pray what good reason is there why children should not? They, like adults, own property which is taxed by laws, in the making of which they have no voice; they have no rights and duties which are defined by the laws, and which they are compelled to obey. Why does not their protection demand that they should have the right to vote?"

"There is a good reason for denying the ballot to them. Their minds and understanding are not sufficiently developed to enable them to vote understandingly, and it would be dangerous in the highest degree to entrust such power in their hands. But the same reason does not apply to women of mature age. If it be said that the mass of women are not sufficiently educated in relation to political matters to vote with discretion, I answer that that is because they have not been permitted to investigate those questions, or had any inducement to do so. But were the prohibition once removed, as it surely will be when the world arrives at the point at which it is willing to do equal and exact justice to all, then woman, having

some inducement to do so, will educate herself in these channels, and will then rise to her true sphere. How I long for that time to come," said Mary, enthusiastically. "I want to vote whiskey out."

"As to that," said Eva, "there are some children whose minds are better developed at the age of fifteen than are those of many men and women at twenty or thirty. The young man who has passed all his life in those studies which best fit him to understand the science of government cannot vote if he lack one day of being twenty-one years of age, while the great awkward lout, but two years older than himself, who never read a book or paper, and never heard a speech in his life; who cannot even write his own name, walks proudly up and deposits a ballot, even the names upon which he does not know, much less the principles which it represents. And as for the true sphere of woman, I think she has attained it when she becomes a loving and beloved wife and mother, when she presides as the honored mistress of a home which the love and industry of her husband have provided for her; when she trains and develops the minds of her children in the pure principles of morality, virtue and true religion, thus fitting them to discharge with credit to themselves and honor to their teacher, their duties to the world of mankind, or when she moves about like a ministering angel on errands of mercy, relieving misery and suffering wherever she finds it. This is my idea

of woman's sphere and woman's destiny, and for my part I crave no higher."

"You may be content with that if you will; content to be the slave of another; to come and go at his bidding and to have no will or even identity of your own. For my part I aspire to something more. I desire to shine in the world of literature, science and politics; to exercise any calling or profession to which my inclinations lead me, and for which I may be able to fit myself—in short, I wish to be free," said Mary.

"May you ever be as free as heart can wish, my dear Mary," said Eva, tenderly, "only beware that in your pursuit of what you call freedom you do not lose your own identity, and, instead of the sweet, loving, lovable woman you now are, become, by contact with the outer world in which you propose to mingle, rough and hard and unfeeling, and so lose the greatest charm of womanhood."

"No fears of that, I think," said Mary, laughingly. "But what about the pursuit of the learned professions by woman? Does your opposition to the enfranchisement of the sex go the length of forbiddding them to travel outside the routine of duties which custom has heretofore prescribed for them?"

"By no means," replied Eva. "I have no objection to woman's pursuing any vocation which does not tend to unsex her and produce the results I have just indicated. I would have every path of

science and usefulness open to woman, and would have her walk in them just as far as she can without the loss of that modesty and retiring disposition which constitute her principal charm and protection; and mingling in the conflicts of the political arena would certainly have that effect. Hence my opposition to it. Certain it is that in mere political contests, as such, there is nothing elevating or ennobling, and nothing which could have the effect of exalting the character or attributes of woman, or increasing her influence for good, but just the reverse. And believing this, and that the strongest defense of her rights lies in inspiring love and devotion to and for her in the breasts of the sterner sex, I shall ever oppose her enfranchisement—at least until I receive some new light upon the subject."

"But how about the compensation received by woman for her labor?" asked Mary. "Do you think the world is perfect in that respect, or are you willing to admit that in this direction there is some room for improvement?"

"What are your views upon that subject?" asked Eva, as naturally as she could had she been a native-born Yankee.

"I think," she replied, "that the grossest injustice is done woman in that respect. I think when a woman performs the same labor that a man does, and performs it just as well as a man does, she should receive the same wages, while in fact her compensation rarely exceeds one-half that

allotted to men. I think it will puzzle even your ingenuity to find an excuse for so glaring an injustice as this."

"To a certain extent I will agree with you," replied Eva. "I will admit that the compensation of woman for labor is at times far below what justice would demand, and I will go farther and say that when a woman performs a man's labor in the great hive of human industry, and performs it as well as a man would, she should receive a man's wages. The only difficulty lies in determining just when that condition of things exists."

"How so? I do not understand you."

"In the first place, woman is seldom as thoroughly the master of her calling or vocation as man. One of the principal reasons for this is, not that woman has less capacity for mastering the details of any vocation than man, but because she seldom intends to devote her life to its pursuit. The female clerk, book-keeper, seamstress, or anything else, regards her employment in these capacities as merely temporary, and generally looks forward to something entirely different in the future, while the man who adopts any of these vocations expects to pursue them all his life, and hence will naturally take more pains to perfect himself in all their details, even to the smallest minutiæ."

"But do you not think that injustice is very often done to women in the matter of compensation for labor which they really perform? Look

at Mrs. Evans, over the way, for instance. With a family of three small children to support, she works early and late at her sewing-machine, for which she receives from that skin-flint, Mr. Jones, but five dollars a week. How she subsists on it is more than I can tell. Now, if she was permitted employment in Mr. Jones' store in place of one of those young men, she could earn at least twice as much."

"But if she went out to clerk, who would care for her children in her absence? Would she be at the store as early and stay as late as the young men? If not, would she do a man's work? And if she did, what would become of her children? Still, I admit that injustice is often done in this way, and especially in the case you mention. But it seems to me that is one of the evils incident to fallen humanity, and for which there is no remedy until the arrival of the millennium and the universal adoption of the Golden Rule."

"But would not the admission of woman to the exercise of the elective franchise do much to remedy the evil?"

"I think not. Attempts have often been made to regulate by law the relations of capital and labor, but always without success. These relations ever have and ever will be regulated by the law of demand and supply."

"Why, Eva, you are quite a political philosopher. But I cannot agree with your notions. Your theories are entirely too fine-spun for my compre-

hension. But let us go and hear Miss Dickinson, and see if she cannot beat some sense into your head upon this subject, for I confess it is beyond my power," said Mary, laughing.

"With all my heart," replied Eva, in the same strain, "but I very much fear that even your great apostle will fail to make any impression on my mind. I fear I am joined to my idols."

"None so blind, etc.," said Mary, and the subject was dropped.

The friends went according to agreement and heard Miss Dickinson's lecture. On their return the discussion was very naturally resumed, but as it took substantially the same range as the former, only varied by the introduction of some new ideas suggested by this able and eloquent advocate of the rights of her sex, it is not necessary that we should inflict it upon our readers. We leave it to each reader to say for him or herself which had the best of the argument, only remarking that the ideas advanced by Mary have received the sanction of many of the most eminent men and women of our time, among whom may be mentioned such names as Horace Greeley, John Bright, Dick Yates, Lucy Stone, Mrs. E. C. Stanton, Harriet B. Stowe, and thousands of others.

The arguments advanced by Eva, on the contrary, are those which have in all ages been employed by the enemies of progress, people who are content with any situation in which they happen to be placed, and who are continually predicting

disaster as the result of any change or innovation. But despite the croakings of these would-be philosophers, the cause is steadily progressing, and the time will yet come when woman will be rated at her true value, and accorded her proper position, when she will be recognized as the peer and equal of man instead of his slave, and in her newfound power will have the means of protecting herself against the evils she is now compelled to endure. Then will her sphere of intellectual enjoyment be enlarged according to her true merit, her merely physical labor will be compensated according to its actual worth, and all the world will be the better and happier for the change from barbarous injustice to the strict rules of equity.

"The fact is women do not post themselves on this subject of voting; they must read and study this matter, for the time is not far distant when we will all have equal rights with the men," said Mary.

CHAPTER XXII.

IT HAD been some time since Mary had heard from her lover, and she was unusually depressed in spirits. Her life, as the reader is well aware, had been of a character to impart a tinge of melancholy to her entire disposition, but now she was even more so than usual. So long a time had elapsed since she had heard from him—so much longer than usual—that she found the sweet dream of happiness in which she had so long indulged was at an end forever. She still remained at Mr. Aston's, partly because she had nowhere else to go, and partly because Eva would not consent to part with her.

One day she had been out paying one of her customary visits of mercy to a poor, sick widow, who had long been a pensioner on her bounty, when, as she returned, Eva met her with a beaming face.

"Here," said she, holding out a letter, "is a cure for your low spirits."

Mary took the letter and glanced at the address. It was in the well-known handwriting, and murmuring, "Thank God, it has come at last," she withdrew to her own room to open and read it alone. Upon breaking the seal she found the photograph of a fine-looking man, but the features were strange to her. She could not understand it,

and turned to the perusal of the letter for an explanation.

It was in the old, familiar, lover-like style, contained renewed assurances of his faithfulness, but told her the day of his return was still uncertain. His business was prospering, but was in such condition that he could not leave it at present, but as soon as he possibly could he was coming home to redeem his long plighted vows. A postscript explained the strange photograph. It ran thus:

"I send a photograph of my partner for your friend Eva Earl. His feelings have been interested in her by your description of her, and he desires to open a correspondence with her. He is a young widower with one child, a sweet little girl, and is the very soul of honor. He would be pleased to have her photograph in exchange for his. His name is Ford Bentley."

She showed this postscript and the likeness to Eva, and the latter, after consultation with her friend, decided, although it was not exactly the orthodox way of forming acquaintances, to send her photograph and a note to Mr. Bentley in the next letter which Mary sent to her lover. This was the beginning of a correspondence between them which was kept up with the utmost faithfulness until in time, becoming mutually interested in each other, their vows of fealty were interchanged without their ever having seen each other.

Time, with his ever restless wing, flitted merrily by to the two women whose lives, so long embit-

tered, were now brightened and blest by the love of faithful, honest, strong-hearted men; and at last came the glad tidings that the time for their departure from the golden shores of California was fixed. They were coming home, each to claim his promised bride, and though months would elapse before their coming, still our friends could look forward with confidence and hope to the haven of rest and love which awaited them. It was finally arranged that the double wedding should take place on the Fourth of July then next ensuing, at Mr. Aston's house.

Soon after this, Eva received a letter from her cousin Clara, informing her that on the 26th of June she was to be married, and invited her to attend the wedding. She did not give the name of her future cousin, but merely informed Eva that he was a young widower with one child, named Rosa, who dearly loved her, and whom she already loved as though she had been her own offspring. The letter contained the most glowing anticipations of future happiness, and warmly urged Eva to be present.

As a matter of course the invitation could not be accepted, and in declining it, Eva informed her cousin of the double wedding so soon to come off in Indianapolis, and invited Clara to extend her wedding tour to that place and be present. In due time came a letter of congratulation from Clara accepting the invitation of Eva, and promising to

arrive in Indianapolis as early as the evening of the third.

About the fifteenth of June the Californians arrived at the capital of the Hoosier State. Words will not suffice to portray the meeting between Mary and her lover after their long and painful separation. Ah! what events had transpired since they parted long years before in the city of Cincinnati. Mary had mourned his faithlessness, while his heart was true as the needle to the pole; she had been wooed and won; had seen her husband go down amid pain and anguish into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and followed his remains to the tomb; had watched beside the bed of a dear friend when she thought that all she had to love was about to be taken from her; had been so close to the dark river herself that its murky waters laved her feet and chilled her frame, and had been mercifully preserved through it all, and now everything promised a future as happy as the past had been miserable.

The adventures of her lover had been startling in the extreme, but this is not the place to recount them. We have nothing to do with his grizzly bear hunts, fights with hostile Indians, his suffering for want of food and water while crossing the plains, the sickness which had prostrated him in that far-off land, and would have proved fatal in all probability but for the kind care and attention of the friend whom he had brought with him to wed her friend Eva. Mary listened with tearful

attention to his history, and in her inmost soul she thanked God for his mercy in sparing and bringing him back to her again.

And best of all, the letter which had produced so much of unhappiness to Mary, and upon the strength of which she had married Dr. Wills, was explained to her entire satisfaction. At the time of writing he was suffering from the most intense depression of spirits, consequent upon a long and uninterrupted course of misfortune, and believing it to be very doubtful if he should ever return to the States, and feeling that it was unjust to hold Mary bound by a promise, of the fulfillment of which he could not see the least probability, he had written the letter to free her from such bonds, believing that, though his own heart bled at so doing, he was thereby promoting her happiness. And when he received the notice of her marriage with Dr. Wills, he was confirmed in that belief, and had no suspicion of the contrary until the arrival of her holiday presents.

The meeting of Eva and her lover, though less demonstrative than that of the others, was nevertheless as pleasant. It must be borne in mind that up to this moment they had never seen each other, but at the first meeting each intuitively felt that the other was well worthy all the love which had been awakened during their correspondence, or that either could bestow. And now Eva learned that the little girl who accompanied her lover was not his child, but the child of a dearly

loved sister, who had been driven from her home by the abuse of her husband, and had left this child in charge of himself and his wife. Since then he had lost all trace of this sister, his wife had died, and he had always cared for the little "Tinnie" and represented her as his own.

It was now but about three weeks till the day set for the double wedding, and preparations for the great event were going on with a rapidity which effectually excluded everything else. On the night of the third, Clara and her husband arrived, and with them came a gentleman—a special friend of Clara's husband—by the name of William Hull. When Clara introduced her husband, Eva, to her surprise, learned that his name was Bentley, the same as that of the gentleman whom she was about to marry. As it was very late when they arrived, they soon retired without meeting any of the family except Mary and Eva.

The next morning the sun rose bright and clear—an augury of the brightness which was to surround the future lives of Mary and Eva. "Happy is the bride the sun shines on," says the adage, and surely, if there be any truth in the adage, they ought to be happy, for never did the sun shine brighter than during the whole of that eventful day. For eventful it truly was in more senses than one. It was to be a day not only of important events to those interested, but of most wonderful surprises—surprises which would seem almost like fiction but for the fact that the author

was present, and knows them to be strictly true.

At the proper time the guests began to assemble in the spacious parlors of the Aston mansion, a gay and goodly part of the elite of the city. Carriage after carriage drove up and deposited its freight of laughing humanity, all clad in their gayest apparel, to do honor to the occasion, for Eva and Mary were universal favorites in the circle in which they moved, and Mr. Aston was esteemed and respected by all who knew him. At last came the man of God, who was to pronounce the words which were to bind together for life the two pairs of loving hearts, so long faithful and so worthy of each other.

Soon after the arrival of the minister there was a gentle buzz among the guests, and soon the word passed from lip to lip, "they are coming." The next moment a side door was thrown open, and the brides and grooms entered. All were attired with the most faultless taste, and an involuntary murmur of admiration burst from the audience. It was but momentary; the next instant it was hushed by an exclamation from a gentleman sitting in the corner of the room, and all eyes were at once turned toward him. It was Clara's husband.

He was gazing as if petrified upon the foremost bridegroom; he half rose from his seat, and then observing that the attention of the whole company was attracted to himself, he, by a powerful effort, resumed his composure and his seat at the same

time, and the ceremony proceeded. But the attention of the guests had been particularly attracted by his strange conduct, and now all were struck with the extraordinary resemblance between him and the bridegroom, who, on his part, having observed the other, seemed scarcely less agitated.

As soon as the ceremony was performed, Clara and her husband approached as if to offer their congratulations. A few words were hurriedly and privately interchanged between the bridegroom and the latter, who then turned to the audience and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen: I owe you an apology for my strange conduct. This man is my brother. It has been years since I have seen him, or since we have had any trace whatever of each other, and when I recognized him as the expectant husband of my wife's cousin, it was but natural that I should be somewhat agitated. This is my apology."

The reader will not need the assurance that the apology was received as satisfactory, or that the congratulations of the assembled guests were equally divided between the happy brothers and their brides—so much so that Mary and her newmade husband were in danger of being overlooked altogether. But they were too much engrossed in observing the happiness of their friends to care for the omission or even to notice it. It was indeed a most pleasant meeting, and added no little to the zest of the occasion.

But this was not the only surprise of the day. When the excitement of this discovery had somewhat subsided, Nannie, the girl who presided over the culinary department of Mr. Aston's house, entered with a train of servants bringing refreshments. No sooner had the glare of the gas-light fallen upon her face than Mr. Bentley, Eva's husband, sprang forward with a great cry of joy.

"What!" said he, "another surprise! Are you Nannie Hull, or do my eyes deceive me?"

"I am indeed," replied the bewildered girl, "and you are——"

"I am Ford Bentley, your long-lost brother, and the little girl with me is none other than your own little Tinnie."

"And I," said Clara's husband, springing to their side, "am your other brother, Herman. Thank God for bringing us all together once more after having so long known nothing of each other, or whether living or dead."

The next moment the girl was weeping with hysterical joy in the arms of her brothers, while the entire company gathered around in wondering astonishment, and tears flowed from many a beautiful eye in sympathy with hers. But still another surprise awaited them.

The gentleman who had accompanied Clara and her husband from New York came up, pale and trembling, and, forcing his way through the crowd, said in husky tones:

"Nannie, my own, my much-loved, injured wife,

do you not know me? I am William Hull, your unworthy but repentant husband. Long but vainly have I sought you, and now I find you here. Oh! Nannie, will you not look upon and forgive me all my cruelty? It was drink that made me the fiend I was to you, but now I have repented and reformed, and, God being my helper, if you will take me to your heart once more, never shall act or word of mine cause you pain again."

One moment she gazed at him as if doubting his identity, and then she flung herself into his extended arms.

"Oh! William," she sobbed, "how I have wept and watched and prayed for this meeting. And at times I have almost despaired of ever seeing you again. But God is good and he has at last answered my prayer."

The guests were amazed, stunned and bewildered at the rapidity with which surprises followed each other. They looked from one to the other as if to inquire whether they were in a magician's enchanted castle or a haunted house; whether they were awake or dreaming, or what new surprise awaited them. But in the midst of the general confusion the reader will readily believe that there were four happy souls who recked little of the astonished looks by which they were surrounded.

And now, dear reader, our story is ended. We have seen the unfortunate Mary duped by a villian and reduced to the condition of an outcast; we have witnessed her redemption through the in-

fluence of a noble order and the Christian religion; we have traced her in her good deeds, by which she sought to atone for the wrongs she had done; and we have witnessed her union for life with the chosen of her heart; one every way worthy of her and in every way qualified to render her happy.

Come with me, dear reader, while we pay a flying visit to the several characters who have appeared in these pages. All are personal friends and intimate acquaintances of mine, and they will make us welcome.

Nannie and her husband live in a pleasant house on one of the principal streets in Topeka, Kansas, in the enjoyment of all the happiness afforded by this world, tempered only by the sad recollection of the untimely end of their little Tinnie, who died but a short time after the reconciliation of her parents, of injuries received from a severe fall while at play.

Clara and her husband live in a small cottage in Emporia, Kansas. They have one bright-eyed baby boy—a brother for little Rosa, who never wearies of watching and admiring him. They are as happy as they deserve to be.

Mary and her husband, and Marcia and her husband, reside in Cleveland, Ohio. As Mary and Marcia before their marriage were united by ties of indissoluble affection, so since their marriage their friendship has continued, and has finally culminated in bringing them into the closest possible

relations to each other. Mary has a boy baby three months old.

Eva and her husband and child live in a small but very comfortable and pleasant house in La Fayette, Indiana. Mr. Aston no longer lives in Indianapolis. When Eva left his house it was too lonely there for him, (his wife and son having been dead some time) and he sold out his property there and went to live with his daughter, his only living relative.

And thus, dear reader, we will bid them all farewell, only wishing that the happiness they now enjoy may continued to attend them all adown the journey of life, and that in the end they may be gathered to still more perfect happiness in the bright realms beyond the tomb, and may you, dear reader, be benefited by reading this little volume.

THE END.

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